

## Rights, Responsibilities & Reactions Intellectual Freedom Newsletter – May 2024

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Book bans continue to be targeted at specific groups and inclusive materials: Mother Jones highlights a recent interview of Ruby Bridges that touches on book bans [as “ridiculous” attempts to “cover up history”](#) (3 min). [Book bans, threats and cancellations: Asian American authors face growing challenges](#) (ABC News, 7 min). Plus, a win for the LGBTQ+ community and educators: [Court rules religious parents can’t opt their kids out of LGBTQ+ classes](#) (Them, 5 min). (**copyright, diversity, inclusion**)

These articles touch on the value of diverse materials and challenging content in fostering learning and empathy: [How comics can spark conversations about race and history in the classroom](#) (ACLU, 10 min), [Author speaks out, as district considers removing two more books](#) ( (KXAN Austin, 3 min), and [Books about sexual assault aren't pornographic. Schools are banning them as 'obscene' anyway.](#) (19th, 9 min). Related, PBS News Hour spotlights the work of teen advocates: [Student Voice: What young people can do about book bans](#) (5 min) and Nonprofit Quarterly highlights groups fighting against censorship: [How LGBTQ+ advocates and groups are combating book bans](#) (7 min). (**inclusion, diversity, access**)

Psychology Today highlights the impact of censorship: [Why book bans are bad for mental health](#) (5 min). The Canadian journal The Tyee presents the larger implications of censorship: [Book Bans Are a Warning of Our Endangered Democracy](#) (11 min). (**copyright**)

Libraries are being talked about on late night shows and on the hill. See [Libraries: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver](#) (HBO, 28 min) -The Guardian offers highlights from the show: [John Oliver on public libraries](#) (6 min). And in D.C., Senator Laphonza Butler [is reading banned books out loud on the Senate floor](#) (Roll Call, 6 min). (**copyright, access, diversity**)

Laws impacting libraries and library workers continue to make the news: [Alabama librarians facing threat of arrest over books](#) (Al.com, 5 min) and [Federal Lawsuit Challenges Prattville Library Policies](#) (7 min). Publishers Weekly provides an overview of current lawsuits against book bans: [The Cases Against Book Bans](#). See also, [4 Lawsuits Challenging Book Bans](#) (Michigan Chronicle, 7 min). Related, [Push to restrict LGBTQ+ rights hits a snag in state legislatures](#) (Washington Post, 16 min). (**legislation, first amendment**)

Some recent state legislation is resulting in limits on access: [New law restricts access to library materials](#) (WWLTV, 3 min) and [An Idaho Public Library Will Become Adults-Only](#) (Book Riot, 9 min). Although, in Vermont they are taking steps to secure confidentiality for youth account holders: [Lawmakers deliberate bill that would give young Vermonters confidential access to library materials](#) (Vermont Public, 2 min). **(legislation, access)**

The NY Department of Education identifies reasons for rejecting the removal of books: [NY Cominsioner upholds decision to retain challenged books in school library](#) (ALA, 3 min). At the same time, School Library Journal reports on silent censorship: [The Cover-Up: Some school librarians alter illustrations to avoid book challenges](#) (16 min). **(censorship)**

Censorship continues to be an issue in Oregon. The Daily Astorian reports on the [recall petition filed against Seaside city councilor over potential book restrictions](#) (4 min). **(censorship, access)**

The Guardian highlights the ongoing censorship of books in prisons: [America's unseen book bans: the long history of censorship in prisons](#) (10min).

More articles on the current wave of censorship: A podcast from the New Republic: [MAGA rage targeting local librarians is getting uglier](#) ( 21 min), from the publishing industry: [Libraries are under siege](#) (Editor and Publisher, 9 min), and an article on relocating books and privatization of libraries: [As book bans soar, public libraries are the new battleground](#) (Capital and Main, 14 min). **(censorship)**

Protestors shut down an art reception at a library: [A photography exhibit about the West Bank ignites tensions in Newton](#) (WBUR News, 8 min) **(first amendment)**

JD Supra provides an overview of various proposed bills in Congress [that push for tech regulation to protect children's privacy](#) (5 min). **(legislation, privacy)**

The New York Times looks at [why Britain keeps giving classic movies new ratings](#) (5 min). **(censorship, diversity, inclusion)**

Libraries are leveraging data to create transparency and accountability: [Libraries Turn to Data Dashboards to Fight Mistrust](#) (Gov Tech, 7 min). **(information literacy, privacy)**

***Rights, Responsibilities & Reactions*** is a monthly roundup of Intellectual Freedom News compiled by the Multnomah County Library Intellectual Freedom Committee. We welcome suggestions at [lib.ifc@multco.us](mailto:lib.ifc@multco.us).

The Economist has published a series on disinformation, including [Disinformation is on the rise. How does it work?](#) (16 min), [The vocabulary of disinformation](#) (10 min), [Producing fake information is getting easier](#) (3 min) and a podcast: [Why disinformation is more dangerous than ever](#) (43 min). Access the [full issue](#) via the ABI/Inform database (note articles have different titles). (**disinformation**)

## AI Spotlight

The Conversation highlights how other factors than bias that impact decision making in AI: [‘Noise’ in the machine: Human differences in judgment lead to problems for AI](#) (Conversation, 7 min). (**information literacy**)

A brief look at the proliferation of fake documentaries and news reels: [The Rise of Artificial History](#) (Tech Policy Press, 7 min). NPR covers why [AI-generated spam is starting to fill social media](#). (NPR, 8 min), (**information literacy**)

The New York Times demonstrates the biases of AI with election information: [See how chatbots can be taught to spew disinformation](#) (10 min). In Arizona, [election workers trained with deepfakes to prepare for 2024](#) (Washington Post, 10 min) (**disinformation**)

An exploratory look at ChatGPT, noting how it mirrors humans and the opportunities to expand perspectives: [ChatGPT: A Partner in Unknowing](#) (Emergence, 60 min). (**information literacy**)

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## Additional Resources

ALA Intellectual Freedom Blog: <https://www.oif.ala.org> A blog dedicated to intellectual freedom issues, and includes the [Intellectual Freedom News](#) –a weekly roundup of IF related articles

Oregon Library Association’s [Intellectual Freedom Toolkit](#) (published February 8, 2022). A range of tools and resources relating to IF challenges and policies created by the OLA Intellectual Freedom Committee.

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