Rights, Responsibilities & Reactions
Intellectual Freedom Newsletter – October 2024

A library in Houston [moved an Indigenous history book to the fiction section](#) (Lonestar Live, 5 min). Since then the recategorization has been reversed: [Texas library committee under review after relabeling Indigenous history book as fiction](#) (Lonestar Live, 4 min). For background on the decision, see [Texas reclassifies book on abuse of Native Americans as "fiction"](#) (Popular Information, 6 min). Also, [Freedom to Read advocates denounced the action](#) as diminishing Indigenous history (PEN, 6 min) and [Attacks on people's stories are attacks on people](#) (Forward Times, 6 min). (**censorship**)

The American Library Association released [preliminary data on 2024 book challenges](#) – so far, there is a decrease in challenges (4 min). BookRiot calls out one of the underlying reasons for the current wave of censorship: [Book challenges are financial strains on libraries](#) (8 min). Time highlights the impact of censorship: [Banning books isn't just morally wrong. It's also unhealthy](#) (4 min). (**censorship**)

More from Banned Book Weeks: Check out New York Public Library's online exhibit, which includes a curriculum for educators: [Banned: Censorship and the Freedom to Read](#). Related: [Why teens across the country are acquiring Brooklyn Public Library's free digital cards](#) (28 min). Author Margaret Renkl praises those fighting against censorship: [Looking for a Superhero? Check the Public Library](#) (New York Times, 7 min). From Religion News: [The Freedom to Read is an essential human - and religious - right!](#) (5 min). (**censorship**, **access**)

Ava DuVernay talks about the importance of continuing the fight against censorship: ['We Have to Work Together': Action Beyond Banned Books Week](#) (American Libraries, 7 min). Good news in California: [California bans anti-LGBTQ+ book bans in public libraries](#) (LGBTQ Nation 5 min). (**censorship**, **diversity**)

Silent censorship flies under the radar and comes from patrons and staff: [Salem librarians report patrons trashing, hiding LGBTQ+ books](#) (Salem Reporter, 5 min) and [Removing books often takes debate. But there's a quieter way](#) (New York Times, 5 min, also [summed up in video](#)). [The chilling effect is real. Now, schools are censoring themselves.](#) (Slate, 8 min).

Related, PEN America's latest report on school censorship: America's Censored Classrooms 2024. (**censorship**)

The Electronic Frontier Foundation, which is part of a lawsuit to protect prisoners' rights to access their mail, highlights the impact of censorship in prisons: Being in jail shouldn't mean having nothing to read (8 min). (**access**, **censorship**, **privacy**)

EveryLibrary Institute recently published a report on the impact of the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 on libraries. For a summary see: Project 2025's dire impact on libraries (Washington Blade, 6 min). Related, state laws New State Laws Are Fueling a Surge in Book Bans (New York Times, 3 min). (**access**, **diversity**)

Washington Post shares data on public library use: Who uses public libraries the most? There's a divide by religion, and politics (8 min). Related, Rampant Magazine reports on the importance of libraries to communities: Who Are Our Libraries For? (24 min). (**access**)

The Conversation dives into the legal issues with internet access for kids: Is childproofing the internet constitutional? A tech law expert draws out the issues (5 min). Related, How to stop advertisers from tracking your teen across the internet (EFF, 8 min). (**access**, **privacy**)

The Conversation highlights some of the key motives behind conspiracy-spreaders and disinformation (7 min). The New York Time reports on the real impact of disinformation: Bizarre falsehoods about hurricanes Helene and Milton disrupt recovery efforts (6 min). The Washington Post provides an interactive with tips on election misinformation: Can you tell what's real or fake? (10 min). For a more in-depth look at the prevalence and underlying issues with disinformation, see I'm running out of ways to explain how bad this is (Atlantic,10 min). See also WHYY's tips on countering disinformation: To combat misinformation, start with connection, not correction (8 min). (**disinformation**)

The Internet Archive has been the target of at least four cyberattacks this month (Mashable, 3 min), compromising user data and causing major disruptions in service to those who rely on the archive for information access. This is another major blow to digital preservation and access after IA lost its copyright court case against publishers last month (Wired, 8 min). Related, Wired provides a deep dive into IA's ongoing battles (25 min). (**access**)

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.

The New Yorker explores the meaning and relevance of privacy: [What Is Privacy For?](#) (17 min) –prompted by a new book on privacy: [Right to Oblivion by Lowry Pressly](#). (**privacy**)

AI Spotlight

The News Literacy Project offers a few takeaways on AI in light of information literacy: [6 things to know about AI](#). Related, [this chatbot pulls people away from conspiracy theories](#) (New York Times, 5 min). While VOA reports on ongoing issues with AI: ['Garbage in, garbage out': AI fails to debunk disinformation, study finds](#) (5 min). (**disinformation**)

Mashable reports on a [Monday Night Football mishap](#) (8 min) and how misinformation can quickly and pervasively spread with Google's AI search result summary. (**disinformation**)

A new report for the Center for Digital Democracy on surveillance of Connected TV viewers to [target them with manipulative AI-driven ad tactics](#) (4 min). (**privacy**)

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.