

Rights, Responsibilities & Reactions

Intellectual Freedom Newsletter – May 2025

The Librarian of Congress was [dismissed by the current administration](#) (NPR, 4 min), which was followed by the [firing of the director of the Copyright Office](#) (Washington Post, 5 min). These dismissals along with the [cuts to library funding](#), [removal of information](#) from government websites, [censorship](#) of federal libraries and other steps to curb access to information prompted the International Federation of Library Associations to release a [statement](#) (3 min). Read about the [legal fight](#) against these dismissals (Politico, 3 min).

In related news, the dismantling of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) was [paused by a court order](#) (WUSA9, 4 min). The Pentagon [reversed the removal](#) of books in the Naval Academy libraries (ABC News, 3 min). American Libraries Magazine provides an [overview of actions taken against](#) and by libraries (11 min). BookRiot [explains the purpose](#) of the Library of Congress and why the institute is being targeted (20 min).

The Guardian highlights the impact of the current administration on [library workers](#) in the U.S. (5 min) as well as the [spread of censorship in the U.K.](#) (5 min). The Chicago Tribune reports how cuts to IMLS [impact interlibrary loans](#) across the country (8 min). (**censorship, access**)

Read about efforts from different groups to save data, history and more: [digital archivists working to save Black history](#) (Wired, 10 min) and [Indigenous scientists protecting their data and culture](#) (Verge, 11 min). Changes at the federal level are being echoed by states, see the [banning of gender and race databases](#) in Mississippi libraries (Mississippi Today, 5 min). Also, Latin American publishing is experiencing issues due to [politics and censorship](#) (Publishers Weekly, 10 min). Related, Gizmodo reports on [Wikipedia being threatened](#) by the Department of Justice (4 min). For tips on preserving community memories, see [Collective memory is a political project](#) (Mia Henry, 7 min) (**diversity, censorship, access**)

Salon walks through the Library Bill of Rights: ["Reading builds empathy": The case for saving America's libraries](#) (16 min). Building on that idea, Dr. Carla Hayden explains how [libraries are the cornerstone of democracy](#) (GBH Media, 32 min). Check out the [new documentary](#) from PBS on public libraries (1 hr 45min). Related, Princeton University Press highlights the [important role for booksellers](#) in supporting democracy (14 min). (**access, censorship**)

One of the [most banned authors](#) explains why they continue to fight censorship (Advocate, 7 min). In Texas, censorship is being upheld as [government speech](#) (Publishers Weekly, 9 min). NPR provides a deep dive into the [current state of free speech](#) (36 min). (**censorship, first amendment**)

The New York Times reports on how the [new media landscape](#) helps spread misleading information and create partisan divides (14 min). From Time a look at how [to address misinformation](#) without censorship (7 min). From Canada, an argument that [misinformation is disinformation](#) through the lens of climate change and elections (National Observer, 6 min). (**disinformation**)

Electronic Frontier Foundation provides [overview of location data](#) in light of surveillance and state legislation protecting privacy of users (12 min). Margaret Killjoy offers an array of tips on [reducing your digital footprint](#) (15 min). (**privacy**)

Libraries will be impacted by the [end of the Digital Equity Act](#), with many no longer able to lend out hot spots and laptops to help people (AP News, 7 min). In a win for libraries and with the hope of inspiring a national movement, Connecticut passed a [landmark eBook Bill](#) (eBook Study Group, 4 min). (**access, equity**)

For deeper dives and more complex takes on intellectual freedom, check out these articles:

- A look at [privacy of thought](#) in relation to DEI training (Association of College & Research Libraries, 58 min).
- A brief argument for zines as [means for epistemic justice](#) (Association for Library Service for Children, 4 min).
- [Criminalizing Librarians](#) from Mariame Kaba
- A collection of essays on [Governing Misinformation in Everyday Knowledge Commons](#) (open access book from Oxford University).

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The Internet Archive launched a [livestream of microfiche digitization](#) to provide a glimpse into the process of making information accessible online (4 min). See also this interview looking at the work of the Internet Archive to [document the internet](#) (WNYC, 27 min). (**access**)

In local news, there is a [play about book banning](#) put on by local high schoolers (Hand2Mouth workshopped the play at Holgate Library) and [an interview](#) with the director of the Eugene Public Library that touches on the current challenges that libraries face (KLCC, 23 min). (**censorship, access**)

AI Spotlight

The need to check the work of AI made headlines after a [summer reading list of fake titles](#) was published and distributed by some newspapers (NPR, 3 min). MIT Media Lab shared the results of a recent study that indicated that AI increases cognitive load: [Your Brain on ChatGPT](#) (1 min). Ars Technica reports on how [AI creates more work](#), offsetting the time saved (3 min). (**information literacy**)

The Internet Exchange looks at the [inequities being created by AI](#) and identifies the need for technological governance to safeguard the future (10 min). Tech Policy argues for the need for [human expertise alongside AI](#) to ensure accurate data and other outputs (6 min). The New York Times reports [AI is improving](#), but still very flawed (7 mins) Related, [AI is spreading old stereotypes](#) to new languages and cultures (Wired, 5 min). Also, Google aims to release [AI designed for kids](#) (4 min). (**diversity, information literacy, disinformation**)

The New York Times exposes a paradox unfolding around the [use of AI in schools](#): (8 min). A professor argues that AI is a useful tool that [reshapes the writing process](#), but doesn't replace it (Conversation, 6 min). 404 Media looks back at how AI made its way [into the classroom](#) (10 min). Related, Forbes reports on how AI tutors provided illicit and [dangerous info to kids](#) (11 min). (**information literacy**)

The Conversation highlights a new study that finds [people trust AI-generated legal advice](#) (4 min) and why people fall for and [spread fake health information](#) (7 min). 404 Media reports on how Instagram's AI Chatbots [lie about being licensed therapists](#) (5 min), while Verge reports on [surveillance concerns](#) with AI therapists (11 min). Reddit users were [subjected to an AI-powered experiment](#) without consent (New Scientist, 4 min). Platformer unpacks how AI tries to [befriend and overwhelm](#) users (15 min). In contrast, Conversation reports how AI can be used to [detect disinformation](#) (7 min). (**disinformation, information literacy, privacy**)

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Harvard Business Review details how people [use Gen AI](#) (18 min). While Tech Policy highlights [DOGE's use of data and AI](#) which brings up privacy and security risks (10 min). Related, TechCrunch highlights the latest viral ChatGPT: ['reverse location search' from photos](#) (4 min). (**information literacy, privacy**)

New changes in WhatsApp demonstrates how tech companies may make [privacy improvements for users](#) (1 min), while at the same time incorporating AI [compromises the privacy of users](#) (BBC, 5 min -includes explainer of encryption). (**privacy**)

The Copyright Office released [part 3](#) of their [reports on AI and copyright](#). Part 3 focuses on Generative AI training and was quickly released before the [firing of the director of the Copyright Office](#) (Library Journal, 4 min). The AI School Librarian provides a [summary of the reports](#) (4 min). Related, staff from the U.S. Copyright Office explore the relationship between [A.I., human creators and copyright](#) (Library of Congress Blogs, 8 min). (**copyright**)

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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