bib'lib

Bibliothèque pour l'accès Libre
à l'information et aux savoirs

CHARTER
of the fundamental
right of citizens to have
access to and share
information and knowledge
via libraries

a b f

Association
des Bibliothécaires
de France I september 2018

1
The right to have access to all cultures and pluralistic information freely and without discrimination

Libraries are public institutions which guarantee citizens free on-site or distant access to knowledge and information. They operate within the framework of public policies which must be made public so as to afford democratic debates.

Libraries serve all people regardless of age, physical appearance, ethnicity, citizenship, race, religion, health condition, identity, sexual orientation, state of pregnancy, family status, disablement, name, gender, union activities, genetic profile, morals, political opinion, origins, school level or diplomas and degrees.

The collections, resources and contents available in or from libraries are a reflection of the plurality and diversity of society and must be free from all forms of ideological, political or religious censorship or business pressure. The neutrality of the Internet is a fundamental condition in the exercise of this right.

In their organization, rules of procedure, resource-sharing and networking libraries are an expression of openness to all publics and all forms of knowledge and cultural expressions. As a principle they should not privilege or exclude any of the latter.

2
The right to thorough and competent guidance respectful of citizens' expectations

In today's information-swamped world, libraries contribute, through their mediation and guidance, to promoting works, giving proper perspective to contents, assessing resources and providing keys to comprehension. With their qualifications and work-ethics, librarians are reliable intermediaries between citizens and their practices and available resources.The continuing professional development of librarians is indispensable to the advancement of their guidance role and to the dissemination of a commons-based culture and broadened user rights. The skills of librarianship are made richer by the different origins and experiences of librarians (most often employees but sometimes also volunteers) but also by the support of other professions and profiles in full compliance with the values set out in the Charter.

3
The right of disabled people to equal and unhampered access to knowledge and information

Difficult conditions of access to knowledge and information are one of the obstacles preventing the disabled from fully and effectively participating in society life. Libraries are to comply with all accessibility standards and requirements and set up services, collections, equipment and facilities meeting information needs.

4
The right to acquire new experiences and train throughout one's life

Libraries support all training and participative workshops apt to contribute to improving citizens' skills outside official learning environments, an involvement which is part and parcel of the renewal of popular education in the digital age. When appropriate, libraries participate in the emergence of open and distance collaborative teaching structures.

5
The right to be in a position to participate in social innovation and civic debates

Libraries are public environments open to experimentation and collaborative exchanges of all types of knowledge on a given territory. In conformity with this principle, they encourage:
→ The networking of actions apt to further social innovation and civic debates;
→ The emergence of new learning practices enabling citizens to be more actively involved in the life of their territory of residence;
→ The dissemination and re-use of innovations in free-format documentation.

6
The right to access open and reliable Internet resources

So as to guarantee citizens the exercise of their fundamental rights to information, training and culture, libraries give them free and continuous access to the Internet with reliable and secure connections, in the best possible technical conditions.

Libraries are not to implement Internet access restrictions or constraints other than those prescribed by Law, whether in terms of user identification, bandwidth limitations or content filtering. Should there be technical limitations citizens must be explicitly advised thereof so that they may challenge them with the relevant authorities.

When they use the Internet in a library, citizens must be guaranteed that there will be no infringement of their privacy and that no personal data about them are collected or transmitted to third parties barring cases prescribed by Law.

7
The right to have access to, reuse, create and disseminate commons-based knowledge

There is commons-based knowledge whenever there is a collective activity meant to create, maintain and share knowledge. Libraries support and facilitate the dissemination and production of such commons-based knowledge by:
→ giving access to and the possibility to reuse the digital public domain freely and without charge, pursuant to the regulations in force or voluntary release by authors of their work into the public domain;
→ focusing on free access to research work and cultural works financed by public funds when they are available in digital form;
→ calling users' attention to works released by their authors in free license or free distribution, with no discrimination relative to commercial offer content;
→ releasing their original content production in free license;
→ furthering an active openness policy of their public data with an open license compliant with the principles of open data, complete with a share-alike license;
→ facilitating experimentation in contributive production in association with all types of knowledge.

8
The right to have access to resources, whether digital or not, in full respect of the diversity of practices and with a view to appropriating information and knowledge

Libraries must make sure that the resources they provide, whether digital or not, do not infringe, technically or contractually, the diversity of the recognized use of traditional media, namely in the actual exercise of:
→ the right to private copying;
→ a fair use of the educational and research exception;
→ usual practices relative to annotation and quotation sharing;
→ the choice to read, view and listen to documents in any hardware and software environment or by any methods and in any locations proper to cultural exchanges.