

Statement on E-Content Pricing

The American people long ago realized the importance of creating and maintaining a literate and informed citizenry. Publishers, authors, distributors and literary agencies have long recognized the important role played in our society by our libraries. In the past, they have supported libraries by providing purchasing discounts of printed materials, promoting authors and working with librarians to increase accessibility and enjoyment of the written word.

In this technological age, libraries must stay responsive to the public and deliver the written word in both electronic and print formats. The Indiana Library Federation, the New Jersey Library Association and the Montana Library Association are increasingly concerned about the publishers and distributors whose policies withhold e-content from library users.

Libraries, like other consumers, should be free to buy any published e-content at competitive prices, to keep these items in their collection and to loan them to their patrons. Anything less violates basic democratic principles of a free market, freedom of speech and equitable access. If financial barriers are removed in libraries, all citizens would have equal access to this material. The Indiana Library Federation is in agreement with the Montana Library Association which asks publishers of e-content to place libraries on a level playing field with other consumers of e-content. The cooperative relationship among publishers, authors, distributors and agents must be restored.

We are aware that the American Library Association is our national voice to advocate for access to content for all members of our society and that the ALA has a Working Group on Digital Content in Libraries examining many of the issues identified above.

The Indiana Library Federation, the New Jersey Library Association and the Montana Library Association strongly oppose the actions by publishers and distributors who set unfair conditions for the sale of e-content to libraries. These conditions include unfair pricing, controlled distribution, restricted ownership and reduced access of e-content.

We join with the American Library Association and the other state chapters to speak out and vigorously oppose these discriminatory policies. We applaud the work of the Working Group on Digital Content in Libraries and urge them to identify strategies for libraries to address the significant barriers to equitable access to content created by these discriminatory policies.

In approving this statement by electronic vote on November 19, 2012, the Florida Library Association Executive Board joined other state and regional chapters of the American Library Association in taking this position.