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NOTE TO THE READER:

At the 2016 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston, MA, upon recommendation by the Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC), the ALA Council adopted ALA CD#19.2, User Generated Content in Library Discovery System: An Interpretation of the ALA *Library Bill of Rights*.

At the 2016 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, FL, upon recommendation by the Council Policy Monitoring Committee, the ALA Council approved the

User Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Libraries offer a variety of discovery systems to provide access to the resources in their collections. Such systems can include online public access catalogs (OPAC), library discovery products, institutional repositories, and archival systems. With the widespread use of library technology that incorporates social media components, intelligent objects, and knowledge-sharing tools comes the ability of libraries to provide greater opportunities for patron engagement in those discovery systems through user-generated content. These features may include the ability of users to contribute commentary such as reviews, simple point-and-click rating systems (e.g. one star to five stars), or to engage in extensive discussions or other social interactions. This kind of content could transform authoritative files, alter information architecture, and change the flow of information within the library discovery system.

The library is not obligated to open its discovery system to user-generated content. A publicly funded library can choose by policy or practice to do so, and limit the contributions of user-generated content to a defined class of users or limit the subject matter of user-generated content, as long as the distinctions drawn are viewpoint neutral and reasonable in light of the mission and purpose of the library.

In any instance, libraries should develop and publish written policies addressing users' contributions to the discovery system. These policies should be made available in commonly used languages within the community served.

The library must clearly identify what is user-generated content and what is library-generated content in the library discovery system. Such a distinction serves to affirm both the users' First Amendment right to free expression and their responsibility for that expression.

Finally, the library must be scrupulous in protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable information of users who contribute content to the library discovery system.¹

Adopted January 12, 2016.
