

CATALOGING CODE OF ETHICS

Catalogers are information experts, who possess special knowledge and skill, with the potential by our actions to help or harm an increasingly global clientele. Catalogers recognize and accept the privilege and responsibility that is ours as gatekeepers of information and architects of the information infrastructure to provide fair and equitable access to relevant, appropriate, accurate, and uncensored information in a timely manner and free of personal or cultural bias. We recognize our responsibility in these areas to society; the institutions we serve; our global, national, and local clientele; other librarians and information specialists in our home institutions and around the world; the profession of cataloging; and individuals as human beings having and deserving rights.

1. We organize, add value to, and provide and maintain fair, equitable, and uncensored access to information for all local, national, and global library users, putting the information needs of our clients and the human right to freedom of information before our own needs and convenience.
2. To ensure that users find the information they need, catalogers gather and organize information and advise users in their choice of information by providing comprehensive, accurate encoding and access points; knowledgeable application and addition of subject headings and classification schemes; and accurate and complete description and notes.
3. We are vigilant in ensuring that we do not purposely or inadvertently “censor” or deny access to information by allowing cataloging backlogs or through inaccuracy, misuse, or nonuse of encoding, subject headings, classification schemes, and authority control.
4. We are honest and truthful in the representation of resources in regards to its subject area, the identity of those responsible for the intellectual content, and its accurate description.
5. We keep authority files up to date, accurately reflecting the intellectual efforts of authors. We avoid cultural bias and preserve cultural specificity in name headings.
6. We contribute to the creation, development, reform, and fair, unbiased application of cataloging rules, standards, classifications, and information storage and retrieval systems. We avoid and work to reform cultural biases in standards for subject headings, classification schemes, and name authority control.
7. We provide accurate, full-level records to the shared databases, following the highest standards and rules for encoding, subject analysis, description, and classification.
8. We are careful not to contribute to the misuse or distortion of information through inaccurate, careless, or minimal cataloging and resist all internal and external pressures to do so. We report and correct errors in the shared cooperative databases.
9. We do not blindly contribute original cataloging for resources for which we have no language or subject knowledge, but instead seek assistance. We carefully review copy-cataloging for errors before adding them to the local database.
10. We commit ourselves to lifelong continuing education for the sake of the profession, our employers and clients, and the society we serve. We provide and seek to promote pre-job and on-the-job training and staff development opportunities for catalogers in languages, subject expertise, special formats and technical skills, and we work for required, comprehensive cataloging education in library schools.