**Group 9 Policy Issues Assignment**

**LIS 653**

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Some of the main points that our group identified were the privacy and confidentiality issues surrounding the accessibility of a student's circulation history for the student, versus the circulation history for the parents, teachers, and administration. One of the pros included the fact that students can use their circulation history as a readers’ advisory tool, enabling them to see what books they’ve already read, as well as other materials of a similar subject matter that they might enjoy. Another pro of gaining access to a student’s circulation history is to allow librarians and teachers the ability to track down who returned broken or damaged materials. Some of the cons include students who do not want to be publically ridiculed or embarrassed for the materials they select based on the content of the book or the reading level. Students may not want the librarian to tell their parents or teachers about the types of materials they’ve been reading, especially if it concerns sensitive topics such as drugs, sex, or violence, as the student might feel it’s a violation of their privacy.  If students fear being embarrassed or scrutinized for the materials they choose, they may not feel comfortable seeking information they need or are interested in.

The Code of Ethics of the American Library Association states in Article III, "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, or transmitted" (as stated in the Adams article How Circulation Systems May Impact Student Privacy). According to the ALA’s Q&A, "Parents are responsible not only for the choices their minor children make concerning the selection of materials and the use of library facilities and resources, but also for communicating with their children about those choices. Librarians should not breach a child’s confidentiality by giving out information readily available to the parent from the child directly. Libraries should take great care to limit the extenuating circumstances in which they will release such information." When it comes to ensuring a child’s health and safety, there are FERPA laws that can  "gives the parents the right to inspect and review the minor student's education records,” such as circulation records, if needed (Butler 153).

Some of the recommendations our group came up with to overcome privacy and confidentiality issues are as follows:

* Develop a privacy policy that states who has access to records and under what circumstances
* Assign protective passwords
* Conduct privacy audits regularly to determine what student data has been collected
* Purge old circulation records
* Teach student library aides and volunteers rules like they can’t look up or give out other student’s information to anyone other than that student
* Set library automation software to automatically delete students’ circulation history
* Fold and staple overdue notices so only student name appears
* Don’t arrange library books by reading level so other students know their friends’ reading levels

Creating policies to overcome privacy and confidentiality issues are only one step of ensuring patron privacy.  With the ever increasing technology trend, privacy issues are not simply found within circulation records, but follow students based on their digital footprints. Aside from circulation policy directives, there are other steps teacher librarians can take to best equip students within and outside of educational environments.

The recommendations for digital privacy and confidentiality issues we addressed in our group are listed as follows:

* Teach online basics, such as how to create good passwords or profiles that don’t provide too much personal information, digital citizenship, etc.
* Buy multiple devices and ebooks to ensure privacy on devices available for check-out
* Delete files when a device is returned
* Use numbers that do not identify students or correspond with other school accounts, such as lunch numbers
* Include digital privacy policies in the library privacy policy
* Work with third-party vendors to ensure confidentiality of users.
* Educate students/staff/parents what information may be collected by third-party vendors

Within our group’s findings concerning copyright issues, we mentioned that the most important points concerning copyright is making sure that staff and students understand that copyright compliance is vital when expecting them to show their knowledge by being creators and producers. Based on Rebecca Butler’s article “Copyright and school Libraries in the Digital Age,” it states that a librarian must check to see if a work is in the public domain (no longer or has never been under copyright restrictions) (11). In order to use a copyrighted work legally, the user must obtain permission from the owner or a clearinghouse. With electronic databases, some might have different copyright licenses, and some allow full articles to be printed, while others do not. An orphan work (can’t find the owner of the work) is up to the librarian’s discretion if they want to risk using it or not (13). Every school also needs a copyright policy - “The further beyond the guidelines that you borrow from a copyrighted work, the greater your chance of copyright infringement”(17).  Copyright compliance can be confusing to staff and students, who may not completely understand fair use factors or may confuse it with plagiarism.  A knowledgeable media specialist can help them navigate issues related to copyright.

The recommendations for copyright issues we addressed in our group are listed as follows:

* Become knowledgeable about copyright compliance, take courses or professional development on basic copyright laws, keep current by reading professional information related to copyright regularly
* Create a copyright compliance program/policy
* Model copyright compliant behavior
* Provide professional development/training to staff on copyright compliance
* Instruct students on basics of copyright compliance (AASL’s *Standards for the 21st -Century Learner* and ALA’s *Code of Ethics*)

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