

Canadian Library Association / Association canadienne des bibliothèques Position Statement on Citizenship Access to Information Data Banks - Right to Privacy

Approved by Executive Council ~ June, 1987; rescinded 29 May 2012, replaced by

Rapid advancements in computer and communications technology, the growth of information use in data services and the economic utility of information are factors which influence two equally important but opposing public interests. The first is the fundamental right of individuals to preserve their privacy by limiting the release of any information which personally concerns them. The second is the necessity for free access to information in order to ensure an informed citizenry in an information rich country.

Therefore, to protect the personal rights and privacy of users to consult and borrow library materials without prejudice, the Canadian Library Association endorses the following policy: That names of library users not be released to any person, institution, association or agency for any reasons save as may be legally required by Federal or Provincial laws.

In order to ensure that universal access to the highest level of organized information is not replaced by a restricted user pay process, CLA recognizes that:

1. In the sophisticated information age in which Canadians live, the value of information lies not in the knowing, but in the use of it.
2. Information as a commodity, which should be regarded as a public good, is of too great a cost for the individual to fund personally.
3. CLA has a commitment to the philosophy of "open availability to information as a tool of economic and social development".