

RESOLUTION on DISINFORMATION, MEDIA MANIPULATION
& the DESTRUCTION of PUBLIC INFORMATION

Whereas the American Library Association recognizes the contribution librarianship can make in giving support for efforts to inform and educate the people of the United States on critical problems facing society (Policy 1.1); and

Whereas the mission of ALA is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all (Policy 1.2); and

Whereas ALA has as one of its officially stated goals that government information be widely and easily available (Policy 1.3: Priority Areas and Goals); and

Whereas inaccurate information, distortions of truth, excessive limitations on access to information, and the removal or destruction of information from the public domain are anathema to the ethos of librarianship and to the functioning of a healthy democracy; and

Whereas evidence exists revealing that some U.S. government officials and agencies use disinformation in pursuit of political and economic power, as well as war, thwarting the development of an informed citizenry and constituting a “critical problem facing society”; and

Whereas the list of documented instances of government use of disinformation continues to grow, and includes:

- the distribution to media outlets of government produced “video news releases” under the guise of independent journalism;
- the use of commentators paid by government agencies to express views favorable to government policies in clear violation of Federal Communications Commission regulations;
- the censorship of scientific studies warning of the true threat of global warming;
- the fabrication and deliberate distortion of information used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq;
- the removal of public information from U.S. depository libraries; and
- heightened assaults on constitutional rights under the guise of “national security”; therefore be it

Resolved that the American Library Association go on record as being opposed to the use by government of disinformation, media manipulation, the destruction and excision of public information, and other such tactics.

Resolved that the ALA encourages its members to teach and nurture 21st century information literacy skills among the American public to help them detect disinformation, media manipulation, and missing information.

Resolved that ALA encourages libraries to actively seek and acquire alternative information resources that provide a broad context for public understanding and evaluation of news and opinion.

Resolved that this resolution be shared broadly with members of ALA, the press, the public and government officials.

Moved by Elaine Harger
Seconded by Peter McDonald

June 26, 2005

Supporting Documentation:

ALA policy references:

- 1.1 Mission, Priority Areas, Goals – Introduction
- 1.2 Mission
- 1.3 Priority Areas and Goals
- 52.4.1 *The Rights of Library Users and the USA PATRIOT Act*

Selected Bibliography on Disinformation

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- 1982 *The Real Terror Network: terrorism in fact and propaganda*, by Edward S. Herman. Boston: South End Press
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- 1989 *The "Terrorism" Industry: the experts and institutions that shape our view of terror*, by Edward S. Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan. New York: Pantheon.
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- 1997 *Warriors of Disinformation*, by Alvin Snyder. New York: Arcade Publishing.
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- 2005 *The Chavez Code: deciphering the intervention of the United States in Venezuela*, by Eva Golinger. Editorial de Ciencias Sociales