CILIP Workshop on Ethics – Flipchart Transcriptions

Held as part of the Member Network Forum at CILIP on 11 October 2017

Contents

The Visibility of Ethics?

Where do the values or ethical principles that guide you in your work come from? (Open Session)

- Upbringing (family and formative years)
- Sector & its governance
- Personal faith
- Professional ethics
- Employer
- Other professionals
- Library courses
- Mentors/role models
- Life experience

The Big Issues
What do you consider to be the big
issues/challenges in your workplace and/or
the profession as a whole? (Table Discussion)

Table 1

- Open access, unethical deals from publishers
- Ethical leadership (outside of the profession and influencing upwards)
- Perceptions of the profession and de-professionalisation
- Weakening voice/attrition
- Budget/funding cuts
- Digital divide
- Maintaining professional standards

Table 2

- Quality of service
- Equality regardless of income
- Free, open access
- De-professionalisation
- Training and CPD for staff and volunteers
- Library users also employee of same company
- Use of data/ownership of data
- Privacy
- Surveillance
- Managers from another profession
- Access (print and digital)

The Big Issues (Table Discussion) (cont)

- Evidence base for practical problems – a lack of guidance
- Censorship/intellectual freedom

Table 3

- Home office Prevent Strategy
- Filtering – White Lists, standard settings
- Shared (not shared!) professional ethics?
- GDPR 2018 (e.g. CCTV)

Table 4

- Constant change
- Lack of professional expertise and support from managers/feeling isolated
- Freedom of information vs restrictions to accessing information
- What we want to provide vs the law/copyright
- Privacy vs surveillance requirements
- Reductions in resources, staff, space – having to prioritise
- Change in perception of the profession, it's value and importance to employers. Employers don't understand the need for professional development. Lack of respect for skills (employers think anybody can do our jobs)

The Big Issues (Table Discussion) (cont)

Table 5

- Copyright conflicts
- Privacy and data Protection
- Funding and a lack of resources
- Lack of professional recognition
- Value perception
- Raising and lowering and standards
- Social media
- Impact of Prevent agenda
- Working with volunteers/ working with private contractors (both of which are out of our direct control)
- Censorship
- Diversity

Big Issues – Table Round-up (Feedback)

Table 1

- Budget/funding cuts
- Perceptions of profession/de-professionalisation/Google effect

Table 2

- Lack of training and CPD opportunities for staff and Volunteers/less time for CPD activities
- Managers from a different profession

Table 3

- Internet filtering
- Prevent strategy
- Data Protection – education of the public

Table 4

- Pace of change in organisations/ restructuring

Table 5

- The raising and lowering of expectations (customers have higher, employer lowering)
- Having to do more with less, always saying "yes"
- Diversity challenges
- Censorship

[Note: this page is provided for information to help understand following Flipchart transcriptions commenting on the Ethical Principles – a copy of the Principles was provided at the Workshop]

Ethical Principles

Library and information professionals are frequently the essential link between users and the information they require. They therefore occupy a position that carries responsibilities.

The conduct of members should be characterised by the following general principles and values:

1. Concern for the public good in all professional matters, including respect for diversity within society, and the promoting of equal opportunities and human rights.
2. Concern for the good reputation of the information profession.
3. Commitment to the defence, and the advancement, of access to information, ideas and works of the imagination.
4. Provision of the best possible service within available resources.
5. Concern for balancing the needs of actual and potential users and the reasonable demands of employers.
6. Equitable treatment of all information users.
7. Impartiality, and avoidance of inappropriate bias, in acquiring and evaluating information and in mediating it to other information users.
8. Respect for confidentiality and privacy in dealing with information users.
9. Concern for the conservation and preservation of our information heritage in all formats.
10. Respect for, and understanding of, the integrity of information items and for the intellectual effort of those who created them.
11. Commitment to maintaining and improving personal professional knowledge, skills and competences.
12. Respect for the skills and competences of all others, whether information professionals or information users, employers or colleagues.

These points are presented in no particular order of priority.

Round-up of Critique of Existing Ethical Principles (Table feedback)

Identify the three most important Ethical Principles

Table 1: 3, 7, 8 and 1, 7, 11

Table 2: 4, 10, 11

Table 3: 6, 7, 8

Table 4: 3, 7, 11

Table 5: 3, 7, 8

(Top EPs: 3, 7, 8)

Can any of the Ethical Principles be dropped?

Table 1: Word "concern" too passive. Need a more active word like "commit".

Table 2: All fluffy. 2&11 (combine), 3 (imagination not relevant in some libraries), 9 (limites to some libraries)

Table 3: 2 (unnecessary), 11&12 (amalgamate), 4&5 (saying similar things)

Table 4: 4 (code of professional conduct), 1 (vague/fluffy), 6&7 (saying the same thing), 2&11 (saying the same thing)

Round-up of Critique of Existing Ethical Principles (Table feedback) (cont)

Table 5: 2, 4, 12 (Professional practice not ethical principles). Possibly 11 too

Is anything missing from the Ethical Principles?

10 needs updating (open access, Data Protection, Creative Commons)

Where is advocacy for the profession/campaigning on relevant legislation/professional issues?

Your Expectations (Open Session)

- Ethical Principles that are less wordy
- Buy-in from employers
- Marketing to employers – value added
- Segment – focus on ethical principles of concern to the profession
- User awareness (by, for example, displaying in a prominent place in libraries)
- Get employers to sign up to them
- Use in recruitment, put relevant principles in job description
- Use for performance management and CPD
- Use to show what sets a librarian apart
- Sit alongside other sets of principles (e.g. NHS)