

"Guide to the National Archives of the United States" and supplemented by restriction statements approved by the Archivist of the United States and set forth in 36 CFR part 1256.

Dated: May 31, 1995.

Trudy Huskamp Peterson,

Acting Archivist of the United States.

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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Principles of Public Information

AGENCY: National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

ACTION: Request for comments.

SUMMARY: In 1989 and 1990 the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) developed and adopted Principles of Public Information and offered them as a foundation for governmental decisions about public information, for use in developing information policies, and for use in creating, using, disseminating and preserving public information. The Commission is reviewing these Principles of Public Information and invites public comment on their current application, relevance and usability.

DATES: Comments should be received by July 15, 1995.

ADDRESSES: All comments should be sent to Peter R. Young, Executive Director NCLIS, 1110 Vermont Avenue, NW., Suite 820, Washington, DC 20005-3522. Comments can be sent by fax to 202/606-9203. Comments can be sent by electronic mail to py_nclis@inet.ed.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter R. Young or Jane Williams, tel. 202/606-9200.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Following are the principles as adopted by the Commission on June 29, 1990.

Principles of Public Information

Preamble

From the birth of our nation, open and uninhibited access to public information has ensured good government and a free society. Public information helps to educate our people, stimulate our progress and solve our most complex economic, scientific and social problems. With the coming of the Information Age and its many new technologies, however, public information has expanded so quickly that basic principles regarding its

creation, use and dissemination are in danger of being neglected and even forgotten.

The National Commission of Libraries and Information Science, therefore, reaffirms that the information policies of the U.S. government are based on the freedoms guaranteed by the constitution, and on the recognition of public information as a national resource to be developed and preserved in the public interest. We define public information as information created, compiled and/or maintained by the Federal Government. We assert that public information is information owned by the people, held in trust by their government, and should be available to the people except where restricted by law. It is in this spirit of public ownership and public trust that we offer the following Principles of Public Information.

Principles

1. The Public Has the Right of Access to Public Information

Government agencies should guarantee open, timely and uninhibited access to public information except where restricted by law. People should be able to access public information, regardless of its format, without any special training or expertise.

2. The Federal Government Should Guarantee the Integrity and Preservation of Public Information, Regardless of its Format

By maintaining public information in the face of changing times and technologies, government agencies assure the government's accountability and the accessibility of the government's business to the public.

3. The Federal Government Should Guarantee the Dissemination, Reproduction, and Redistribution of Public Information

Any restriction of dissemination or any other function dealing with public information must be strictly defined by law.

4. The Federal Government Should Safeguard the Privacy of Persons Who Use or Request Information, as Well as Persons About Whom Information Exists in Government Records

5. The Federal Government Should Ensure a Wide Diversity of Sources of Access, Private as Well as Governmental, to Public Information

Although sources of access may change over time and because of advances in technology, government

agencies have an obligation to the public to encourage diversity.

6. The Federal Government Should Not Allow Cost to Obstruct the People's Access to Public Information

Costs incurred by creating, collecting and processing information for the government's own purposes should not be passed on to people who wish to utilize public information.

7. The Federal Government Should Ensure that Information About Government Information is Easily Available and in a Single Index Accessible in a Variety of Formats

The government index of public information should be in addition to inventories of information kept within individual government agencies.

8. The Federal Government Should Guarantee the Public's Access to Public Information, Regardless of Where They Live and Work, through National Networks and Programs like the Depository Library Program

Government agencies should periodically review such programs as well as the emerging technology to ensure that access to public information remains inexpensive and convenient to the public

Conclusion

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science offers these Principles of Public Information as a foundation for the decisions made throughout the Federal Government and the nation regarding issues of public information. We urge all branches of the Federal Government, state and local governments and the private sector to utilize these principles in the development of information policies and in the creation, use, dissemination and preservation of public information. We believe that in so acting, they will serve the best interests of the nation and the people in the Information Age.

Invitation to Comment

Interested persons are invited to submit comments and recommendations regarding these principles. All comments submitted in response to this notice will be available for public inspection, during and after the comment period, in Suite 820, 1100 Vermont Ave., NW., Washington, DC from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Dated: June 1, 1995.

Peter R. Young,

NCLIS Executive Director.

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