

## January 2020 Tuesday Topic: What is the Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse?



Intellectual  
Freedom  
Committee

Oregon Library Association

*Welcome to Tuesday Topics, a monthly series covering topics with intellectual freedom implications for libraries of all types. Each message is prepared by a member of OLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee or a guest writer. Questions can be directed to the author of the topic or to the [IFC committee](#).*

You've heard of [ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom \(OIF\)](#) and the work they do [collecting censorship stories](#), but did you know that we do something similar in Oregon as well?

The [Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse](#) (OIFC), administered by the State Library of Oregon, was established in 1987 with the primary mission to collect and compile information about intellectual freedom issues at libraries in Oregon.

Each year the OIFC encourages Oregon libraries and schools to [report](#) on challenges to intellectual freedom. Challenges can be any of the following:

- Materials challenge (books, movies, music, magazines, digital content)
- Internet-related challenge (filtering issues, access to computers, use policies)
- Library service (meeting rooms, programs, author visits, exhibits, displays, hold shelf practices)
- Patron privacy or confidentiality (personally identifiable information, circulation records)
- Hate crime (defacement of library property to target a specific group; use of swastikas or other symbols of intimidation, harassment or assault on library property)
- Other (student publications or performances, access to libraries or library cards, social media, artwork, "First Amendment Audit")

The OIFC Coordinator then assembles this information into an [annual report](#) and a [cumulative list](#) of materials challenged in Oregon since 1987. These reports are valuable tools for educating people about intellectual freedom throughout the state. Teachers, librarians, and booksellers in Oregon, for example, use the information for Banned Books Week displays, activities, discussions, and events. In addition, the OIFC Coordinator can use reported information to connect someone currently dealing with a challenge with a colleague who has dealt with a similar challenge, to provide support and advice (with permission from both parties).

In December of each year, the OIFC Coordinator submits collected information to ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom – minus any personal or institutional information – in support of their effort to raise awareness and respond to censorship threats by creating [resources for libraries](#). Oregon libraries and schools are welcome to report challenges directly to ALA, but having the information locally has proven useful in supporting our libraries and schools experiencing challenges.

So please [report challenges](#) to the OIFC!\* The State Library encourages you to report any challenges whether or not they have been through the formal challenge process; this includes any challenges that may be occurring in schools outside the library. The more information we have, the better picture we can paint about the intellectual freedom landscape in Oregon.

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*\* OIFC does not publish any information identifying you, your library, your school, or your community. Identifying information is retained only to connect libraries dealing with similar challenges.*