



Joint IFLA/IPA statement on Freedom of Expression on the Internet

The International Publishers' Association (IPA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) state that access to, and expression on, the Internet and all of its resources should be consistent with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and especially Article 19:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

- Recognising that unhindered access to information is essential to freedom, equality, global understanding and peace,
- Acknowledging that the fundamental principles underlying the use of copyright materials in the print environment remain the same in the electronic environment,
- Asserting that intellectual freedom is the right of every individual both to hold and express opinions and to seek and receive information and is at the heart of both publishing and library and information service,
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Observing that:

- The Internet has become a vital medium for freedom of expression and freedom of access to information,
- The provision of unhindered access to information via the Internet supports communities and individuals to attain freedom, prosperity, creativity and development,
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IFLA and IPA assert that:

Access should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship.

IFLA and IPA urge:

The international community to support the development of Internet accessibility worldwide, and especially in developing countries, to thus reap the global benefits offered by the Internet,

National governments to develop a national information infrastructure which will deliver Internet access to all the nation's population,

All governments to support the unhindered flow of Internet accessible information and to oppose any attempts to censor or inhibit Freedom of Expression.

Approved by the IFLA/IPA Steering Group at its meeting in Toronto on 26th June 2003.