

Analysis of Professional and Ethical Requirements for The Profession in The Field of Modern Information and Library Science

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Abstract

This article examines the professional ethics, deontology, and moral responsibilities of library and information personnel in the digital age. Analyzing international standards (IFLA, ALA, CILIP) and foreign practices, it proposes a three-dimensional ethical matrix comprising library, librarian, and user domains. It also addresses regulatory aspects in Uzbekistan's library sector and highlights the institutional role of libraries in social integration and cultural preservation.

Keywords: Information and library science, professional ethics, library deontology, digital transformation, IFLA, intellectual freedom, personal data privacy, information culture, ethical matrix, social integration.

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1. Introduction

The digital transformation of society and the rapid expansion of the global information landscape are fundamentally reshaping both the core mission and the social standing of information and library institutions. These profound changes, in turn, demand the establishment of entirely new and rigorous standards for the professional competencies and ethical responsibilities of library and information professionals. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the core requirements placed on the professional profile of information and library personnel, the trends in their transformation, and the globally and nationally recognized standards of professional deontology and ethics. In fully revealing the essence of these requirements, special attention is paid to the criteria that define the moral responsibility and professional duty of

industry specialists.

This is because in the modern digital environment, possessing high moral and ethical values, alongside professional knowledge and skills, is of paramount importance. Indeed, a librarian's professional ethics constitutes the complex of moral requirements and norms inherent to them during the process of serving information consumers. As a socio-cultural institution, the library plays a vital role in satisfying the information and cultural needs of society members. In contemporary conditions, high professional competence among librarians is considered a fundamental prerequisite for providing quality service to users. In particular, strict adherence to moral and ethical standards during service delivery is of utmost importance, since a reader's general perception of a library's operations is primarily formed through their direct interaction experience with the staff.

In developed foreign countries, librarianship ethics has been deeply researched both institutionally and theoretically, with national and global ethical codes developed by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) serving as a conceptual foundation. In particular, the American library scholar Robert Hauptman has researched the philosophical and deontological problems of library and information ethics, notably the issues of protecting freedom of access to information and intellectual freedom, Michael Gorman advanced the theory of enduring ethical values and professional responsibility in librarianship. Don Fallis and scientifically substantiated the ethical norms for ensuring the confidentiality of readers' personal data and overcoming the information divide in the digital information environment.

Ethical issues in the field of library services have been researched by a number of library scholars in CIS countries. In particular, G.A. Altukhova has examined the issues of a librarian's professional ethics in general terms. V.A. Borodina, S.I. Golovko, S.A. Yezova has scientifically analyzed the specific features of library communication. Ethics is an important branch of philosophy that studies human moral behavior, the system of moral norms in society, and the obligations of individuals toward one another and society. This discipline scientifically examines the spiritual and moral aspects of human activity, as well as moral values and principles.

The IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and Other Information Workers is a fundamental document based on the recognition of the right to information as one of the fundamental human rights in modern society. The main purpose of the Code is to promote the principles of ensuring freedom of information, rejecting any form of censorship, and providing unfiltered, free, and equitable service to users. The document particularly emphasizes that librarianship is not merely a technical process, but a professional activity that serves social, cultural, and economic well-being and demands high moral responsibility. Furthermore, based on Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the document interprets freedom to receive and impart information as a vital factor for the democratic development of society and the enhancement of individuals' information literacy. The Code encompasses six core areas that regulate the responsibilities of information workers toward society, users, and colleagues. These include freedom of access to information, social equality and non-discrimination,

privacy of personal data and transparency, the balance between Open Access and copyright, as well as the principles of professional neutrality and anti-corruption. The document urges librarians to separate their personal views from professional obligations, build collections neutrally, and continuously improve their professional skills. Fair relations among staff, equal labor rights, and principles of professional cooperation are defined as essential criteria for the sustainable operation and positive status of the library community.

In countries around the world, library ethics manifests as a comprehensive system of rules that defines moral norms, values, and principles in the professional activity of librarians. It aims to ensure free and equitable access to information during the provision of library and information services, protect users' rights, maintain confidentiality, and foster professional responsibility.

The theoretical and philosophical roots of this system and its role in professional education are deeply analyzed in Don Fallis's study 'Information ethics for twenty-first century library professionals.' The author substantiates that relying solely on traditional professional codes of conduct is insufficient for resolving the complex ethical dilemmas faced by twenty-first-century library and information professionals. This is because these codes have certain limitations, lacking a specific theoretical basis and failing to provide clear solutions in conflicting collision situations. It is emphasized that specialized courses in information ethics must be integrated into library science curricula, applying crucial philosophical concepts such as utilitarianism, deontology, rights-based theories, and virtue ethics to practical cases. According to Fallis's main scientific conclusion, a deep understanding of information ethics is an essential methodological prerequisite for effectively fulfilling the core mission of librarianship: providing society members with necessary information in an objective and secure manner.

In global librarianship, the theoretical and methodological foundations of ethical norms have been institutionalized across diverse socio-political and cultural environments through specialized professional codes of ethics and standards. These normative ethical documents serve as primary practical instruments defining a librarian's social responsibility, the mechanisms for ensuring information freedom, and the boundaries of interaction with users. A comparative analysis of professional ethics codes from countries with

advanced information and library sectors - identifying their universal fundamental principles alongside national-specific approaches and evaluating the potential for translating advanced foreign practices into the national system - is of significant theoretical and practical importance.

The evolution of the Code of Ethics developed by the American Library Association (ALA) demonstrates a direct alignment with the socio - political and legal transformations of the information society. While early codes primarily emphasized institutional management standards and administrative procedures, the subsequent adoption of the Library Bill of Rights (1948) and the Freedom to Read Statement (1953) shaped the field's fundamental system of values. The revision stages in 1981 and 1995 marked a radical shift in the conceptual approach: ethical principles transitioned from imperative prescriptions to a declarative framework expressing civic responsibility and professional stance. This shift indicates a transition from an institutional governance model to a decentralized ethical paradigm based on the individual and collective responsibility of the professional community.

The 2008 revision of the Code of Ethics and subsequent methodological clarifications introduce mechanisms for ensuring a balance between intellectual property and the interests of information users, as well as aligning employees' freedom of speech rights with legal and ethical principles. The ALA Code does not possess centralized punitive or regulatory functions; rather, it is designed as an advisory standard intended for voluntary adaptation by local and state-level libraries. Such a flexible deontological model serves as an effective regulatory mechanism, enabling professional ethical norms to respond dynamically to the challenges of a changing digital environment, copyright transformations, and civil liberties.

The 'Ethical Framework' developed by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in the United Kingdom, adapted to the demands of contemporary digital society, contrasts with traditional declarative norms by comprehensively systematizing the fundamental principles of information professionals' activities during a period of rapid development in artificial intelligence and data science technologies. This conceptual framework encompasses priority areas such as ensuring human rights and social justice, combating censorship through open and equitable access to

information, protecting users' personal data and search query anonymity, and maintaining a balance of academic integrity while respecting copyright laws. Furthermore, the CILIP model designates institutional responsibilities to include providing objective and neutral sources in the fight against disinformation, continuously enhancing professionals' skills in the ethical use of innovative digital tools, and contributing to the sustainable development of the information ecosystem.

The code of 'Ethical Principles for Library and Information Professionals,' approved and applied by the German Federation of Library and Information Associations (Bibliothek & Information Deutschland), aims to harmonize professional ethics in the field with the core values of a democratic society. According to this document, the primary duty of librarians is to create equal and impartial conditions for all in accessing information, reject any form of censorship, maintain professional independence free from political or commercial influence in collection development, and support open knowledge models. In addition, the ethics code specifically reinforces requirements to strictly ensure the confidentiality of users' personal data, enhance the media and information literacy of the population, and develop the library as an unbiased and safe socio-educational space for all segments of society.

Having comprehensively revised the document, the Korean Library Association (KLA) formally approved the updated Code of Ethics for Korean Librarians at the 56th National Library Congress held on October 16, 2019. In addition to traditional professional responsibilities, the Code reinforces new priority principles such as ensuring digital equality, information literacy, and digital justice, protecting users' personal data confidentiality in the digital environment, and safeguarding intellectual freedom from contemporary threats. The Code of Ethics for Korean Librarians, approved by the KLA, defines the ethical responsibilities and deontological principles of information and library professionals toward society, users, and the professional community. According to the modern concept, librarians are responsible for ensuring equal, impartial, and free access to information in a democratic society, defending intellectual freedom, and fostering digital justice and information literacy. The Code obligates librarians to serve users without discrimination based on gender, age, social status, or beliefs, strictly protect personal data privacy in the digital information environment, preserve national and global cultural heritage, and continuously

upgrade their professional qualifications while maintaining professional independence.

The Code of Ethics approved and enforced by the Hong Kong Library Association (HKLA) serves as an institutional framework balancing intellectual freedom and professional responsibility in the activities of information professionals. While recognizing the uncensored and free flow of information and ideas as a fundamental prerequisite for research and freedom of expression, this code obligates librarians to build information resources fairly and impartially, free from personal, ideological, or political views. Furthermore, the HKLA framework establishes guarantees for users' non-discriminatory and equal access rights, the preservation of confidentiality regarding their search queries and personal data, and the respect for intellectual property rights as priority ethical norms of library and information service.

Following a comprehensive revision, the Italian Library Association (Associazione Italiana Biblioteche – AIB) approved the current edition of the 'Codice deontologico dei bibliotecari: principi fondamentali' (Code of Ethics for Librarians: Fundamental Principles) at the General Assembly held in Turin on May 12, 2014. While preserving classic principles, this updated edition significantly reinforces contemporary professional responsibilities, such as ensuring free access to information, maintaining a balance between intellectual property (copyright) and user rights, combating plagiarism, and promoting the ethical use of information.

The formation and refinement of professional ethics standards by the Italian Library Association (AIB) represent a crucial stage in the institutionalization of library and information activities within the country. The Association's initial Code of Ethics was adopted at the General Assembly held in Naples in October 1997, resulting from three years of preparation and extensive public discussion among industry professionals, including the first online consultations conducted via the AIB-WEB platform. However, the adoption of the Code of Ethics for Librarians and Other Information Workers by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in 2012, alongside the enactment of Law No. 4 of 2013 regulating 'unregulated professions' in Italy, necessitated a radical revision of the document. Consequently, a new edition of the code was officially approved under the title 'Codice deontologico dei bibliotecari: principi fondamentali' (Code of Ethics

for Librarians: Fundamental Principles) at the General Assembly held in Turin on May 12, 2014.

While preserving the conceptual structure of the 1997 edition, the 2014 revision increased the number of articles from 18 to 22 and nearly doubled the text volume. This expansion was achieved through alignment with the IFLA Code by integrating contemporary principles such as the balance between copyright and user interests, information literacy, guarantees of free and open access, and working with remote information resources. Furthermore, the text achieved terminological and normative precision through gender neutrality, the prohibition of restrictions based on gender or social background, and the use of the auxiliary verb 'dovere' to enhance the mandatory nature of the norms. At the same time, while retaining its lack of administrative and legal sanctioning powers, the code was reinforced as an ethical and deontological guideline for industry professionals and society

The official Code of Ethics adopted by the Librarians Association of Malaysia (Persatuan Pustakawan Malaysia - PPM) was formed on the basis of the National Information Policy approved in 1989, and it is also registered by IFLA as the sole and primary professional ethical code for Malaysia. Based on the principles of the country's National Information Policy, the Code of Ethics defines the moral standards and deontological responsibilities that information and library professionals must uphold in their professional activities. Acknowledging the vital role of librarians in selecting, organizing, preserving, and disseminating information resources, the document places a duty upon them to ensure equal, impartial, and open access to information within the framework of the law. According to the Code, library workers are required to defend intellectual freedom, protect the confidentiality of users' personal data and information queries, and avoid conflicts of interest by separating personal views from professional duties.

In the Russian Federation, ethical and moral standards serve as a vital regulatory factor in the institutional development of librarianship and the elevation of the social status of the library profession within the context of the information society. The 'Code of Ethics for the Russian Librarian,' adopted at the XVI Annual Session of the Russian Library Association (RLA) held in Tyumen on May 26, 2011, established the conceptual framework for professional values and social responsibility in this

field. The preamble of the Code reinforces humanism as the ideological foundation of the librarianship profession, recognizing the dissemination of knowledge and information as an essential prerequisite for maintaining inter-social stability, social justice, and cultural diversity within the country. This document functions as a unified corporate standard aimed at shaping the spiritual and moral stance of professionals during the modernization of library and information services.

Analyzed from a sociological perspective, this Code systematizes the tripartite system of relations between the librarian and the social environment - namely, society, the user, and the professional community. The document puts forward essential principles such as combating censorship and any barriers to information access, protecting users' equal rights and the confidentiality of their personal data, and refraining from recommending intentionally misleading or non-transparent sources. The Code specifically reinforces the librarian's responsibility to enhance professional honor and prestige by developing information culture, preventing plagiarism, and avoiding conflicts of interest. Consequently, this serves as a crucial legal and ethical mechanism for ensuring the professional deontology of library and information system personnel amid socio-library transformations.

Librarianship ethics, enriched with a deep humanistic core, systematically regulates the professional activities and conduct of library personnel. This mechanism strengthens the professional community's social status and highlights its strategic and intellectual functions. The internalization of universal moral norms and high professional qualities by specialists forms the foundation of their institutional responsibility and professional deontology, while also determining the development of an autonomous system of professional ethics and social institutionalization within the field.

Library deontology represents an independent branch of deontology, grounded in several core factors: the need to study the history of behavioral normalization and codify behavioral standards among librarians; the imperative to update normative behavioral regulation for library professionals in response to societal deficits in morality and culture; and the necessity to foster deontological and communicative culture, professional growth, a humanistic stance toward users, and subject-subject relationships.

The social and professional cooperation of information-library specialists with society is primarily grounded in the principles of professional duty, free from personal or political interests. A core criterion of institutional activity is ensuring users' rights to unhindered access to knowledge and resources while eliminating censorship and administrative-economic barriers. To guarantee information security and data privacy, readers' search queries are kept strictly confidential. In accordance with legal requirements, the dissemination of information promoting violence and discrimination is prevented, with a strong focus on fostering intercultural dialogue among ethnic and cultural groups within society.

Humanitarian principles such as equality, respect, and benevolence occupy a leading role in organizing interactions with users. The provision of library and information services guarantees the equal rights of citizens to access information openly, regardless of their demographic, social, or ideological affiliation. Specialists directly assist readers in both physical and virtual information environments to satisfy their needs for knowledge and intellectual growth, while also fostering information culture and reading skills. This process serves as a crucial factor contributing to individual socialization and the enhancement of civic consciousness.

A specialist's attitude toward professional activity is manifested in their commitment to continuous professional development, lifelong learning, and the enhancement of their professional standing. Adhering to the requirements of professional image and corporate culture, including established dress code regulations, is an integral component of library and information personnel ethics. According to standards of professional conduct, employees are strictly prohibited from using their official position and duties to satisfy personal interests or to advance personal views that hinder the fulfillment of their professional obligations.

Thus, the ethical norms and duties in the professional activity of an information-library specialist are not limited merely to individual service culture, but also necessitate an intrinsic connection with institutional and social structures. Such a multifaceted nature of ethical relations in the field requires studying library ethics as a holistic and systematic phenomenon. Stemming from this fundamental approach, the sustainable operation of the library institution relies on hierarchical proportionality among a three-tier ethical system: library

ethics, librarian ethics and user ethics.

In this framework, library ethics serves as a meta-system guaranteeing the right to uncensored information and the inviolability of intellectual property on a global and social scale; librarian ethics defines the impartiality, confidentiality, and professional responsibility of the specialist who directly implements these principles in practice; while user ethics expresses the conduct of rational and responsible use of library resources and the public space. These three elements are intrinsically interconnected: institutional norms form the foundation of the professional deontological code, whereas the specialist's high service culture fosters respect for the library and information environment and academic responsibility in the user.

The correlational intersection point of these three ethical systems manifests at the interactive boundaries where information freedom, the inviolability of personal data (confidentiality), and academic integrity converge. For instance, copyright infringements or instances of

plagiarism by a user (deviations in user ethics) generate a functional and situational conflict between the librarian's professional duty of impartial service (librarian ethics) and the institution's institutional responsibility to protect intellectual property (library ethics).

Furthermore, while maintaining the confidentiality of a user's search queries in the digital information environment is a requirement of the professional code, it may intersect or conflict with the institution's information security regulations. Such correlational interdependence requires ethical norms to function not in isolation, but as a coordinated, unified library and information ecosystem. The sustainable and efficient operation of the library institution relies on the hierarchical proportionality of ethical principles across three interrelated domains. Generalizing international experience (IFLA, ALA, BID) and the principles of sectoral deontology, we propose classifying ethical relations within the library environment as a three-domain matrix (Figure 1).

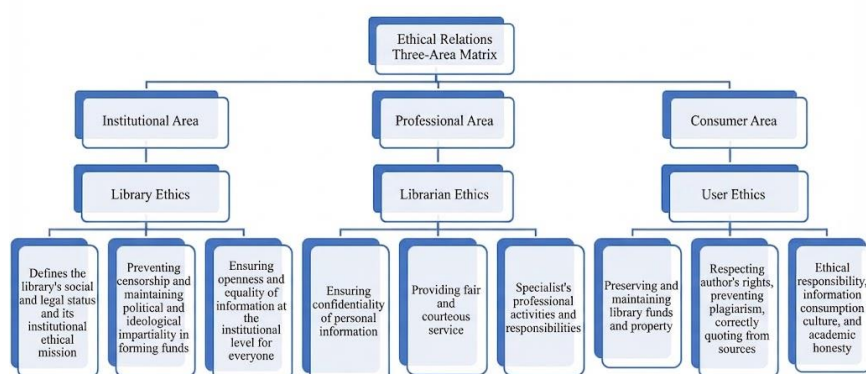


Figure 1. Three-dimensional matrix of the hierarchy of ethical relations in the library environment

"Consequently, as illustrated in the figure, the sustainable and efficient operation of the library institution relies on the hierarchical proportionality among a three-domain ethical system: library ethics, which embodies institutional status and the principles of information freedom; librarian ethics, which rests on professional deontology and service culture; and user ethics, which ensures information consumption culture and academic integrity.

The Institutional Domain - 'Library Ethics' - defines the ethical status and mission of the library as a social and

legal institution. Grounded in theories of institutional ethics and information freedom at the institutional level, it encompasses global principles such as ensuring open and equal access to information for all, preventing censorship, and maintaining political and ideological impartiality in collection development"

The Professional Domain-"Librarian Ethics"- directly expresses the professional activity and responsibility of the field's specialists, resting on the principles of professional deontology and communication culture. This level highlights the personal and professional duties

of the librarian, such as providing impartial and courteous service to users regardless of their religious, national, or political views, and ensuring the confidentiality of reading preferences and personal data.

The Consumption Domain -"User Ethics" -represents the moral responsibility of society members who receive information, relying on the culture of information consumption and the concept of academic integrity. This domain encompasses obligations such as respecting copyright, properly citing sources without resorting to plagiarism, and handling the library collection and property with care. Thus, the educational and information-communication role of the library in society is ensured through the systemic harmonization of this three-tier ethical system.

These functional-situational conflicts demonstrate that resolving ethical collisions arising in the digital information environment at the level of isolated local rules is impossible; rather, they require an integral proportionality of institutional and professional values. For this very reason, modern library and information activities necessitate the formation of a coordinated and institutionalized ethical system. As a result of this need, unified professional and institutional standards aimed at balancing diverse interests within the global information space have taken shape.

According to an analysis of the experience of developed foreign countries, their librarianship ethics codes are predominantly developed and implemented not by state bodies, but by independent professional public organizations - library associations. Unfortunately, national library and information practice lacks such an independent library association that unites the professional community of specialists and protects their ethical-deontological interests. To a certain extent, this circumstance hinders the development of professional ethics norms as a self-regulating mechanism at the level of civil society institutions and their integration with international standards.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the ethical and professional conduct of personnel in information-library institutions is primarily regulated by general normative-legal documents established by the state. In particular, Resolution No. 595 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated October 14, 2022, "On Additional Measures to Ensure Compliance with Codes of Ethics by State Civil Servants," serves as the primary

regulatory basis. This resolution defines general behavioral norms concerning civil servants' professional responsibility, intolerance toward corruption, avoidance of abuse of service powers, public communication culture, and service discipline. However, this document and the internal local rules derived from it are universal in nature and do not fully reflect the specific characteristics of library activity, including specialized ethical-deontological norms such as ensuring uncensored access to information, confidentiality of user requests, and intellectual freedom.

The social functions of libraries are not limited solely to preserving information resources and providing access to them; rather, they encompass comprehensive functions such as the socialization of the public, transmitting cultural values from generation to generation, and strengthening social integration. First and foremost, information-library institutions, acting as repositories of knowledge, make a vital contribution to the intellectual development of individuals. The information environment they create serves to develop users' independent reading competencies, provides broad access to the necessary information-resource base for conducting scientific research, and ensures the rapid and effective dissemination of up – to – date knowledge across various fields within society. As a result, this lays the foundation for the formation of a highly knowledgeable, innovatively thinking, and socially active generation.

Information and library institutions serve as a vital institutional mechanism for the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage. The depositary preservation of ancient manuscripts, historical documents, rare publications, and examples of national literature strengthens cultural identification and enables the transmission of historical sources in their original form to future generations. Furthermore, information and library institutions rank among key agencies supporting social integration and social inclusion as public centers. The open and free infrastructure of libraries creates an environment of equal opportunities for various social strata, including children, youth, the older generation, persons with disabilities, and low-income populations. Seminars, trainings, and cultural-educational events organized in libraries strengthen social solidarity and serve to enhance the culture of communication and civic engagement within society.

Beyond acting as information and communication hubs,

libraries emerge as social institutions of strategic importance in the spiritual, educational, and cultural development of society. Through their core functions - such as the transmission of knowledge, the safeguarding of cultural heritage, and the reinforcement of social solidarity—they ensure the sustainability of societal progress.

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