**Montana Library Network Shared Electronic Content and Systems Development Policy**

**March 2025**

**Purpose of the Policy**

The Shared Electronic Content and Systems Development Policy is a tool to guide the selection and maintenance of the e-content and systems to be funded, procured, or otherwise facilitated through the Montana State Library for use by Montanans through their local libraries. This policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years.

**Mission and Guiding Principles**

The Montana State Library’s mission is to help all organizations, communities, and Montanans thrive through excellent library resources and services. The rights of Montanans of any age, race, color, sex, culture, social origin or condition, or political or religious affiliation to lawfully access and share ideas are protected in the Constitution of the State of Montana.

**Scope and Community Served**

This policy covers all electronic content and systems funded, procured, or otherwise supported by MSL for the benefit of all Montanans. These resources help Montana public libraries and other tax-supported libraries to fulfill the library standards described in Administrative Rules of Montana 10.102.1159:

* Everyone has safe, comfortable, and convenient access to the library and its services.
* Everyone has access to updated and regularly maintained physical and digital library content and services.
* Everyone can find library materials online.

**Funding Sources**

The State Library Commission’s Statutory Authority (22-1-103 MCA) includes accepting and administering any state, federal, or private funds appropriated for library services, and furnishing library assistance and information services to all Montana residents.

In addition, participating libraries may contribute funding from their approved budgets, Friends of the Library groups, Foundations, or other private donations in order to enhance shared E-Content collections, in accordance with selection procedures.

**Selection Process**

Electronic content and systems funded or facilitated by MSL strive to reflect the needs, interests, and viewpoints of all Montanans sufficient unto their needs, taking into consideration access needs in a digital environment. Electronic content and systems shall meet the diverse educational, cultural, and recreational needs of all Montanans.

Selection factors will include ability for all libraries statewide to leverage the service sufficient unto their users’ needs, accessibility, interest, demand, timeliness, audience, viewpoint, availability of materials in appropriate formats and licensing or purchasing models, compatibility with State Procurement Bureau requirements, information obtained from professional and user reviews, and budget.

Individual Electronic Systems will have separate collection policies that reflect the guidelines and built-in parameters of that particular system. Policies will also reflect the needs of the patrons utilizing that system for electronic content.

No electronic content and systems that meets the needs of Montanans shall be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of the author or those contributing to its creation. Not all materials may be suitable for all members of the community.

*Collaborative Collections*

The Montana State Library will invest in Collaborative Electronic content and systems so that every Montana Library has affordable access. Cooperation among libraries delivers more information from a wider variety of sources than a single library can provide, permits better resource allocation, and leads to more intensive use of collections. Through providing or hosting statewide library resources, MSL allows Montana libraries to:

* Share resources with other libraries for the benefit of all Montanans
* Expand library holdings through a shared collection
* Improve patron access to materials of special interest
* Coordinate or share purchasing in order to minimize duplication of efforts
* Increase access and volume of content at a more cost-effective rate

**Intellectual Freedom and Personal Responsibility**
The Montana State Library affirms the individual’s personal responsibility and freedom to learn and to consider ideas . An opinion or idea represented in the e-content collection reflects the State Library’s commitment to intellectual freedom and is not an endorsement of a point of view or opinion. The Montana State Library serves multiple types of libraries and patron access varies by library type and by local library policies to meet the unique needs of intended users and vendor audience restrictions. Like adults, children and teens have the legal right to find the information they choose. Libraries have a responsibility to provide information for a wide variety of users and may not deny an individual access to materials in the collection. Libraries encourage parents and caregivers to be familiar with what their children are reading and to guide their children's use of the library.

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**Requests for Reconsideration of E-Content**

Registered Montana library patrons who want to communicate their concerns about electronic content or systems should contact the Library Director at their local library, who will give the patron a copy of this collection development policy and the reconsideration procedure. To the extent that the system allows we may consider requests to reconsider individual titles or course offerings. Titles or resources that have been contested within the past three years will not be reconsidered.

Materials Reconsideration Procedure:

1. Registered Montana library patrons who want to communicate their concerns about materials in the Montana Library Network’s shared E-Content collection should contact the Library Director at their local library, who will give the patron a copy of this collection development policy and the materials reconsideration procedure.
2. The Montana library patron will complete the Materials Reconsideration Form and submit it to the Library Director at their local library
3. The local Library Director shall submit the Materials Reconsideration Form to the State Librarian.
4. The State Librarian shall review the Request for Reconsideration Form and make a written recommendation regarding the request to the State Library Commission within four weeks of receiving the request. The State Librarian may consult with selection committees for a specific program if the request is relevant to that program.
5. The Materials Reconsideration Request will be placed on the agenda of the next scheduled State Library Commission meeting. After reviewing the pertinent documents (Materials Request Form, State Librarian written recommendation) and hearing statements from the patron, Library staff, selection committee, and any public wishing to speak, the Commission will make final ruling on the request.

A written response will be sent to the patron within 14 days of the final State Library Commission decision.
NOTE: Requests for reconsideration will only be accepted from a registered patron of a Montana library.

**Materials Reconsideration Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Library where you are a registered patron: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent yourself? \_\_\_\_
Or an organization? \_\_\_\_ Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Resource on which you are commenting:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_Book ( or e-book)

\_\_\_ Movie

\_\_\_ Magazine

\_\_\_ Audio Recording

\_\_\_ Newspaper

\_\_\_ Other Title (please describe):

1. What brought this resource to your attention?
2. Have you read, viewed, or listened to the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?
3. What are your specific objections to this material or subject matter?
4. Can you suggest titles of materials which might be added to the collection which address the same or similar issues?
5. What action are you requesting the committee consider?