# LIBR 200: Discussion 6

### Topic:

*We have studied some of the historical and contemporary influences on the broad matter of "intellectual freedom." Now consider the future -- the future that you will inhabit as an information professional. What future influences do you anticipate changing/altering/complicating your job and the environment you work in with respect to intellectual freedom?*

## Intellectual freedom as an archivist

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In my future career as an information professional and archivist, I think I’ll be in the midst of access vs. privacy, relative to archived documents and records. I don’t yet know in which sector I’ll be working, but archivists must constantly focus on what must be preserved versus what can be purged. Within governments, there must be a balance between citizens having access to information, and restricting that access for security or individual privacy reasons. Whether a single person ultimately makes that decision, or a set of strict rules, the decision must be made, and the records processed accordingly.

Even now, many U.S. state governments are proposing laws to further restrict access to vital records, under the fear of “identity theft”. They are not always dissuaded by myriad reports that show the likelihood of these records being used for criminal activity is near zero, or that England’s vital records indexes have been public (without privacy delay) for over 150 years, with no complications. On a federal level, our access policies are changing at the bat of an eyelash election.

Records removed from access and destroyed are gone forever, while records released under a policy of transparency cannot be re-privatized.

While I won’t probably have to deal with the issues that libraries face of making information available - but to whom?, I may have to deal with deciding if releasing certain records won’t invade someone else’s privacy, or compromise governmental security.

If I should work in a corporate archives, where public access is less of an issue (if at all), I will have to deal with making sure that those asking for the records are entitled to receive them, and that I provide access to only those records requested.