

### **EQUACC task force strategies**

On June 28, the ALA Council passed a resolution that called for the formation of a Presidential Task Force primarily charged with studying challenges and potential solutions in libraries for improved electronic content access, distribution and preservation systems, and infrastructure in response to the creation and migration of materials from print to electronic access.

The group—the Equitable Access to Electronic Content (EQUACC) task force—held a retreat March 7 and 8 in the ALA Washington Office to set forth its agenda and goals. Given the developments in the e-content marketplace at that point in time, the retreat gave the group the opportunity to develop short-term and long-term strategies for guiding ALA members and engaging them in this critical issue.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the group released the following statement:

Recent action from the publishing world in the e-book market place has reignited interest and sparked many questions from librarians, publishers, vendors, and readers. Two ALA member task forces—the presidential task force on Equitable Access to Electronic Content (EQUACC) and the E-book Task Force—were recently created to address complex and evolving issues. EQUACC met this week in Washington, D.C., to provide ALA with guidance and recommendations for a coordinated ALA response to the challenging issues.

In light of recent publisher changes affecting libraries' ability to provide e-books to the public (e.g., restricting lending of e-books to a limited number of circulations) and the refusal of some publishers to sell e-content to libraries entirely, the task force will:

- work to establish meetings between ALA leadership and publisher and author associations to discuss model lending and purchase options for libraries.

- establish mechanisms for interactive and ongoing communication for ALA members to voice concerns and pose questions to ALA leadership.

- establish communication and solicit input with other ALA member divisions and units, including the Office for Intellectual Freedom.

In addition to the above, the task force recommends that ALA pursue the following:


- conduct an environmental scan to understand the current landscape and project future scenarios.

- work with appropriate partners within and outside of ALA to improve access to electronic information for all, with a particular focus on people with disabilities.

- identify and support new and emerging model projects for delivering e-content to the public.

- develop a national public relations and education campaign highlighting the importance of libraries as essential access points for electronic content.

ALA members and the public can communicate with ALA on these issues through a new Web site dedicated to the challenges and potential solutions in libraries for improved access to electronic content. This site will be live in early April, and the URL will be announced at launch. These efforts reflect on libraries' long-standing principles on equitable access to information, reader privacy, intellectual freedom, and the lawful right of libraries to purchase and lend materials to the public.

ALA calls upon all stakeholders to join us in crafting 21st-century solutions that will ensure equitable access to information for all. 

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