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Practicing Privacy Literacy in Academic Libraries: Theories, Methods, and Cases edited by Sarah Hartman-Caverly and Alexandria Chisholm (review)

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Practicing Privacy Literacy in Academic Libraries: Theories, Methods, and Cases

*edited by Sarah Hartman-Caverly and
Alexandria Chisholm*

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BECAUSE OF THEIR GENERAL CONCERN OVER SURVEILLANCE, AS WELL AS THEIR MORE SPECIFIC interests in supporting student learning and empowerment regarding privacy, Sarah Hartman-Caverly and Alexandria Chisholm tasked themselves with editing *Practicing Privacy Literacy in Academic Libraries: Theories, Methods, and Cases*. The book opens by highlighting the moment when they, as librarians at Penn State who cocreated the Penn State Berks Privacy Workshop Series, saw a need in their field to bring privacy literacy into the spotlight. “This book is intended to fill a gap in the library literature,” Chisolm writes, “in exploring emerging technology adoption and data collection practices in libraries along with the subsequent privacy implications” (xiii). The book achieves this goal in a four-tiered approach: three chapters lay the foundation on what privacy literacy is, the next three explore the need for information professionals to protect privacy, while the third and fourth sections include case-study chapters on educating about and advocating for privacy, respectively. Laid out as it is, this well-researched text offers a balance of both practical and theoretical aspects of navigating privacy literacy in academic libraries.

In defining what privacy is, Hartman-Caverly and Chisolm posit in chapter 1 that privacy is a respect for persons. They support their argument with a conceptual framework that centers “people, not data or systems” in its privacy considerations (4). The book editors and chapter authors go on to further explain in this chapter why libraries are ideally placed to “contribute to privacy literacy work” (15). Chisolm then takes the reins in chapter 2, elaborating the conceptual framework further and drawing parallels with digital wellness. The final chapter of this section is rounded out by Mary Francis and Dustin Steinhagen, who outline the work in Dakota State University’s privacy-focused research lab.

The second section of the book speaks to the philosophical and ethical grounding of academic librarian work as the three chapters outline the necessity of protecting patron privacy. Jamie Marie Aschenbach, MLIS, JD, first explains the US laws that mandate the protection of patron privacy through the lens of academic library access services. Notably, this chapter offers a modern approach to this role, as it goes beyond just circulation patterns to speak to e-resource records as well as internet activity and behavior. Virginia Dressler goes beyond access services in chapter 5 by suggesting how to “embed . . . a privacy review into digital library workflows” (85). The chapter includes documentation,

checklists, and examples of such privacy reviews, such as that implemented in the analog to digital conversions at the University of California Berkeley Library. Additionally, Dressler supplements the chapter with a list of staff development tools.

Closing out the second part of the book, Andrew Weiss narrows in on the threat of surveillance capitalism in academic libraries. Weiss's chapter is an essential read and a well-documented call to action for librarians of all kinds.

Once privacy is defined and the need for its protection is made clear, the book goes on, in chapters 7–12, with examples of different pedagogical approaches to privacy education. Included in these chapters are exercises, assignments, and syllabi to facilitate the mobilization of the gleanings from earlier parts of the book. The book begins to close with an exploration of advocacy from both the approach of policy work (chapters 13 and 14) and pedagogical standards and curricular partnerships (chapters 15 and 16). The final chapter of the book speaks to the need for professional development in privacy literacy among information professionals.

With the pervasiveness of potential privacy threats, this book would be a welcome addition to all academic library collections and a recommended read for library employees of all types.