

QUESTIONABLE CONTENT

Mindy Brunkhardt
Andrew Leigh
Dawn Nurdyke
Lynn Pratt

Emporia State University

LI 801 XA: Foundations of Library and Information Science

CAST OF CHARACTERS



Joe Patron

Jill Librarian



Jane Mother

THE SETTING

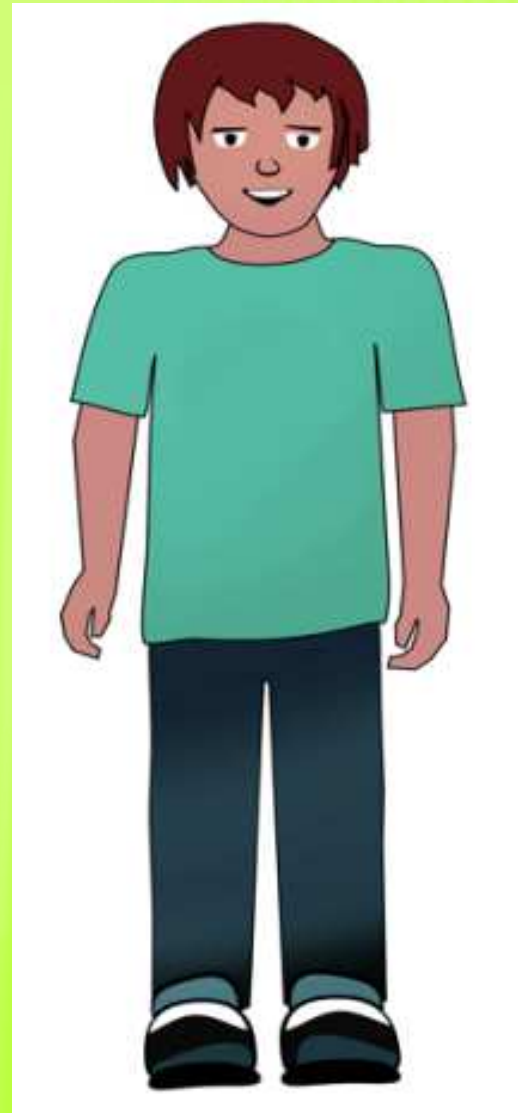
- ✖ Small Midwestern town
- ✖ Population comprised of primarily
 - + White
 - + Conservative
 - + Lower middle class
- ✖ The public library
 - + Highly valued
 - + Heavy reliance



PRESENT DAY

CASS MODEL

- ✖ Cass Model
 - + Six stages
 - + Joe's place
 - + Relevance



TOPEKA & SHAWNEE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

✖ November 2008

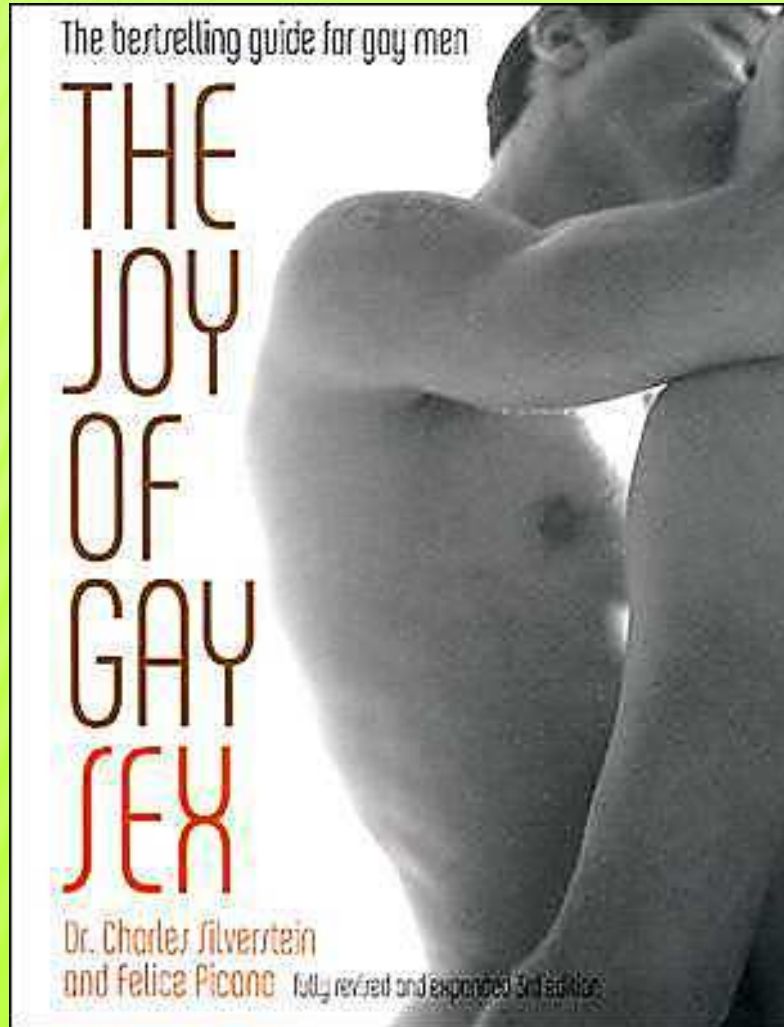
- + Expression of Concern
- + Mrs. Kim Borchers
- + TSCPL staff

✖ Late December 2008

- + Library board of trustees
- + Received similar letter of challenge



TOPEKA & SHAWNEE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



- ✖ Four books placed under restricted access
 - + The Joy of Sex
 - + The Joy of Gay Sex
 - + The Lesbian Kama Sutra
 - + Sex for Busy People
- ✖ “Harmful to minors statute” of the Kansas Statutes

TOPEKA & SHAWNEE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

- ✖ February 23, 2009
 - + 5-3 vote moved to restrict access
- ✖ Immediate political upheaval
 - + Kansas BOE decision to restrict evolution education
 - + Mayor accused of packing the library board
- ✖ Threat of lawsuits



TOPEKA & SHAWNEE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

✕ Dean of ESU SLIM

- + Stated the ALA does not restrict any printed materials (Bill of Rights)
- + Admitted communities influence local board decisions

✕ TSCPL director

- + Challenged the board
- + Asked if staff should review and assign restrictions to 600+ books
- + Coincidentally cited Rubin's argument, pg 397



THE ETHICAL DILEMMA

DUTY-BASED THEORY

“I should never act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law.”

DUBIOUS DUTIES

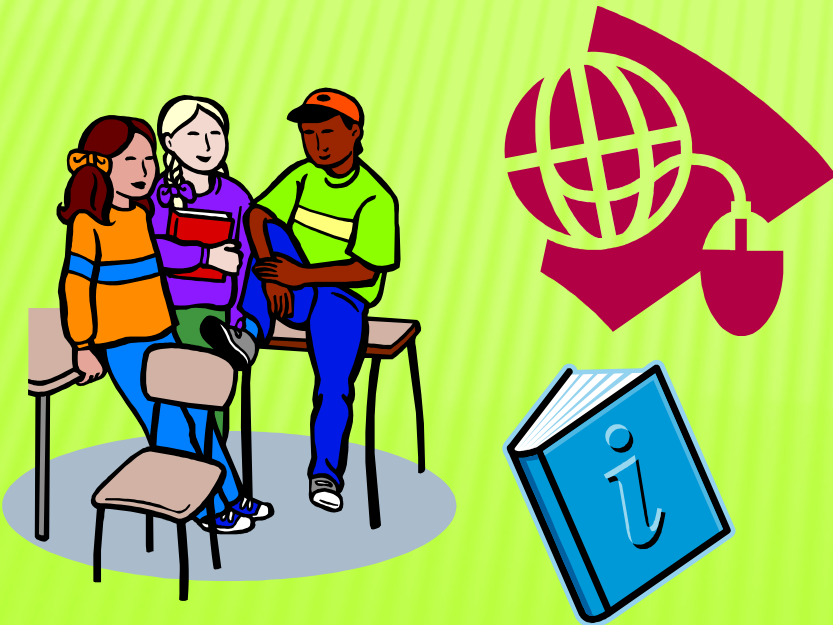
+ Conflicts

- × Provide access
- × Protect parent's rights
- × Protect Joe from harm
- × Teach Joe to judge information for himself
- × Challenge censorship



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- ✖ To make a case... against all forms of censorship
- ✖ Openly challenge the removal of the material
- ✖ Refer the teen to other sources



CONSEQUENCE-BASED THEORY

“...distinguishes right actions from wrong actions is that they have better consequences.”

KEEPING THE BOOK

- ✗ Potential further conflict with the mother and others who are offended by the material
- ✗ Staying true to the ALA Bill of Rights
- ✗ Potential loss of patrons who disagree with decision

REMOVING THE BOOK

- ✗ Compromise the needs of teens to safely explore their sexuality
- ✗ Make the mother and other community members happy
- ✗ Potential lawsuits, as in Topeka case

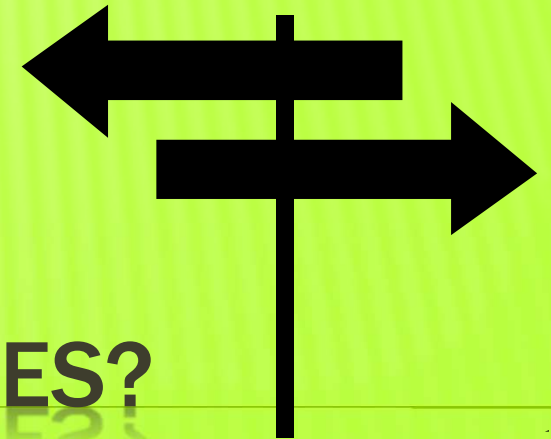
WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

KEEPING THE BOOK

- ✖ Setting example for other libraries to defend intellectual freedom
- ✖ Providing an educational resource for an “invisible minority”

REMOVING THE BOOK

- ✖ Setting a standard and making it okay for other libraries to do the same
- ✖ Further limiting the availability of resources for an “invisible minority”



WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

- ✖ The most positive consequences, however...
- ✖ Domino effect of seemingly tolerable consequence
- ✖ Long-term protection of the
 - + Library
 - + Library's values
- ✖ Risky behavior



RIGHTS-BASED THEORY

centers around rights we have by virtue of being human. Specifically, we have a natural right to unrestricted access to information and privacy.

LIBRARIAN'S DILEMMA



- ✖ A minor's rights to controversial material
- ✖ A minor's right to privacy and intellectual freedom
- ✖ What age?

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- ✖ Separation and organization
 - + Not censorship
 - + No prohibition for minors to access "adult" materials
- ✖ Opportunities
 - + To express
 - + To not express



VIRTUE-BASED THEORY

“...determined by the virtues that human beings ought to have....the right thing to do is what a virtuous person would do in the same circumstances.”

FOUR ARISTOTELIAN VIRTUES

✖ Courage

- + Perseverance through intimidation
- + React rightly to opposition

✖ Temperance

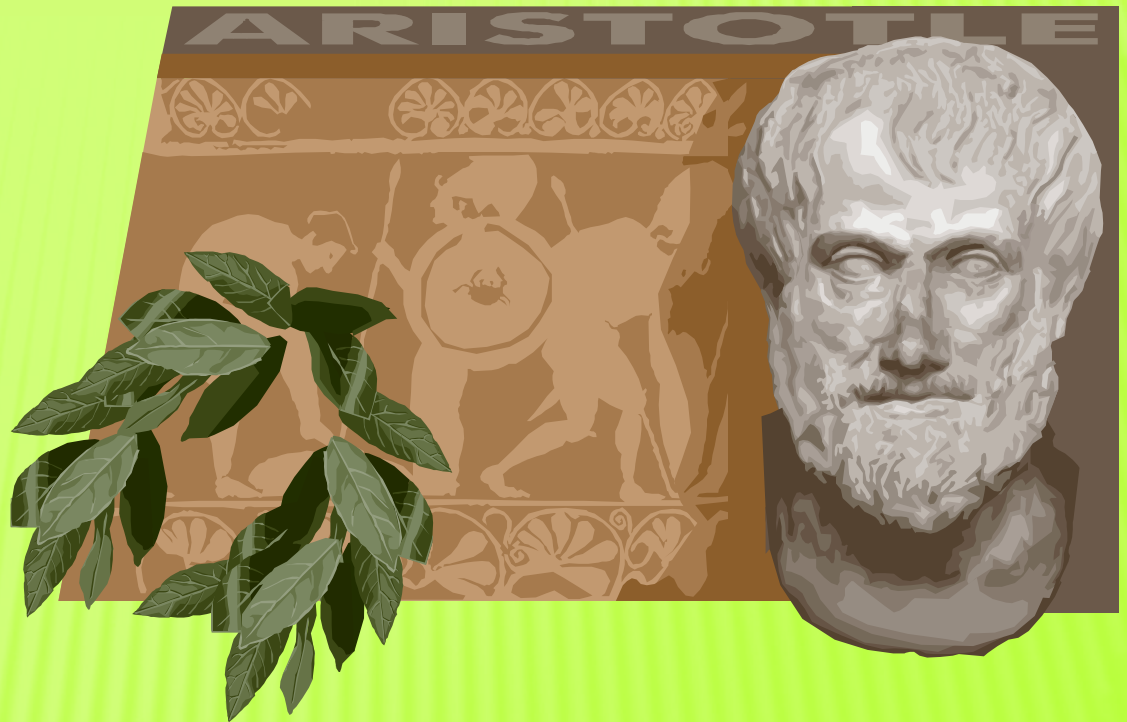
- + Moderation
- + Restraint

✖ Friendliness

- + Socially pleasant
- + Agreeable

✖ Generosity

- + Giving without expectations
- + Charity



THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

✕ 1 Corinthians 13:13

- + Without love I am a clanging cymbal
- + Faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love



✕ Galatians 5:22-23

Fruits of the Spirit

Love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness,
generosity, faithfulness,
gentleness, self-control

WHICH IS MORE...?

- ✖ Courageous
- ✖ Temperate
- ✖ Friendly
- ✖ Generous
- ✖ Loving



LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF THEORIES

✖ Do not provide an answer about the right thing to do



✖ Do force us to explicitly consider our ethical reasoning



ETHICAL CONCLUSION



- ✖ Not an easy ethical decision
- ✖ We have considered the
 - + Librarian's duty
 - + Patrons' rights
 - + Consequences of choices
 - + Virtuous decision

GROUP DYNAMICS

- ✖ Member roles
 - + Waiting for a leader
- ✖ Communication
 - + Finding the right frequency
- ✖ Improving efficiency
 - + Moving forward



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