

On Ethical Assessment

Locating and Applying the Core Values
of Library and Information Science

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Montana State University

**Library Assessment
Conference 2020**
Online



Hi there!

I'm Scott Young

Today's talk is about values-based decision-making
in the practice of library assessment

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Slides, video recording, and transcript available here:

scottwhyoung.com/talks/ethical-assessment-lac-2020

or

cutt.ly/lac2020

Research Questions

Which values matter to LIS professionals?

Which values matter to library assessment practitioners?

How do values support ethical decision-making in library assessment?

Professional Identity

Marking the characteristics of a profession

Professional Values

A history of LIS professional values

Values-in-Action

Practical applications of values

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Greenwood (1957) outlines five basic attributes of a profession:

- Systematic theory
- Authority
- Community sanction
- Ethical codes
- Culture

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“I believe that a measure of a profession’s development is its understanding of the values that govern its practice.”

— Preer, 2008

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“The values of a profession are the beliefs of the group.”

— Seminelli 2016



For practitioners in Library and Information Science, "understanding these values improves our ability to recognize ethical situations and to make ethical decisions."

— Rubin & Froehlich, 2010

Professional Values

A brief history of LIS professional values

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Professional Values

A brief history of LIS professional values

- Five Laws of Library Science (Ranganathan, 1931)
- Infrequent attention for subsequent decades
- Rise of automation and information technologies in the 1980s and 1990s prompts renewed interest in values



— *ALA President Summers, 1989*



“The challenge that we face in trying to embrace technology without losing our basic values and how technology can alter those values.”

— ALA President Summers, 1989

Professional Values

ALA Core Values

Access

Confidentiality/

Privacy

Democracy

Diversity

Education and
Lifelong Learning

Intellectual
Freedom

The Public Good

Preservation

Professionalism

Service

Social Responsibility

Sustainability

Professional Values

LIS Values as represented in published literature 1931-2003

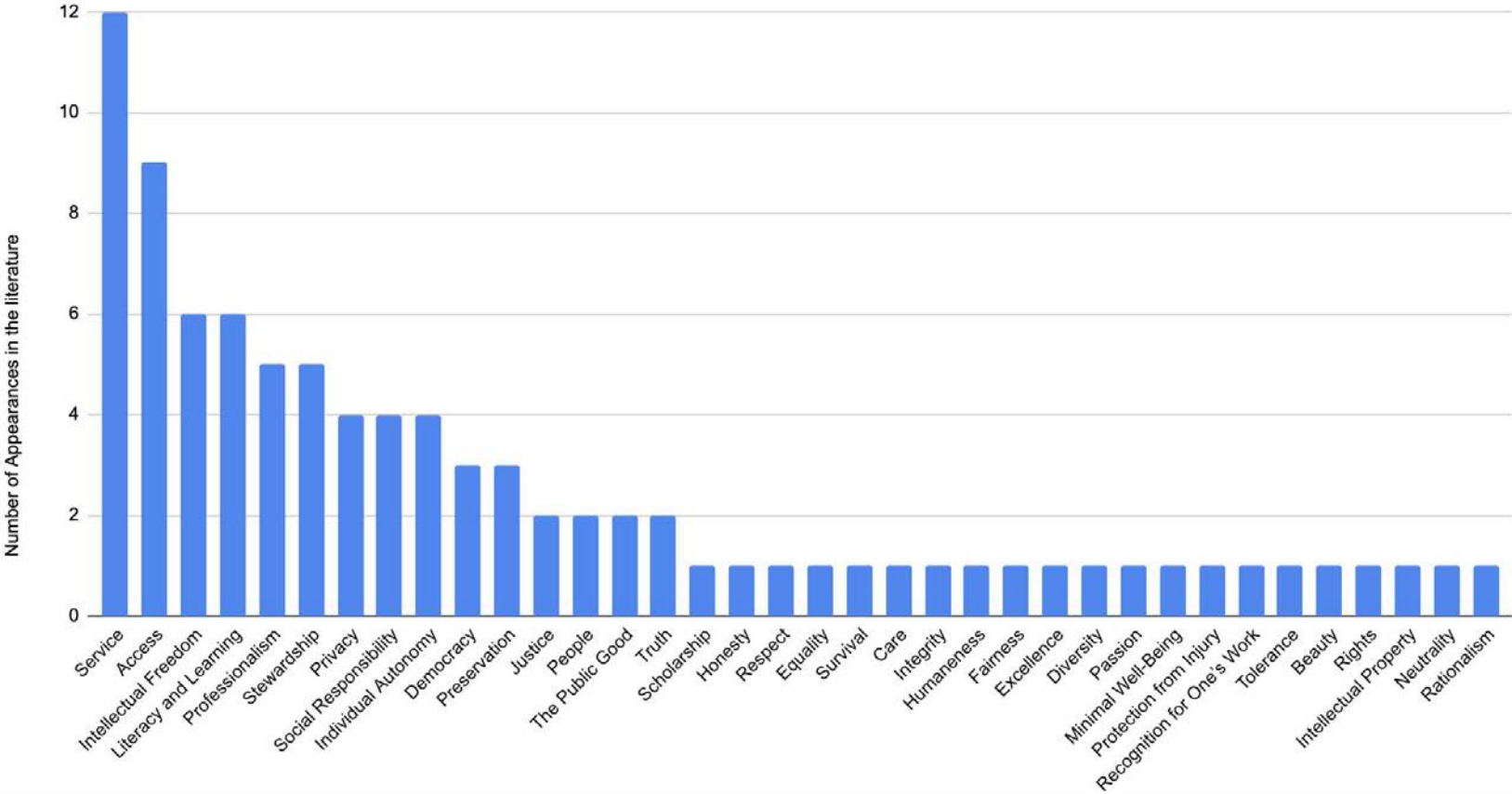
- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Service | 13. People | 25. Excellence |
| 2. Access | 14. The Public Good | 26. Diversity |
| 3. Intellectual Freedom | 15. Truth | 27. Passion |
| 4. Literacy and Learning | 16. Scholarship | 28. Minimal Well-Being |
| 5. Professionalism | 17. Honesty | 29. Protection from Injury |
| 6. Stewardship | 18. Equality | 30. Recognition for One's Work |
| 7. Privacy | 19. Survival | 31. Tolerance |
| 8. Social Responsibility | 20. Care | 32. Beauty |
| 9. Individual Autonomy | 21. Integrity | 33. Rights |
| 10. Democracy | 22. Humaneness | 34. Intellectual Property |
| 11. Preservation | 23. Fairness | 35. Neutrality |
| 12. Justice | 24. Excellence | 36. Rationalism |

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LIS Values as represented in LIS literature, 1931-2003





Values are “continually produced and reproduced in the library discourse” and are “ideas to be struggled over in both discourse and practice.”

— Drabinski, 2016

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Practical Ethics

Stabilizing Force

Vocational Awe

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Vocational Awe

LIS values are complicated when they become:

- Canonized
- Idealized
- Weaponized

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Future Directions

- Continued research related to values that are relevant for decision-making in the practice of library assessment
 - Common ethical dilemmas
 - Existing ethical responses and actions
 - Developing a new framework or decision-aid to support a values-based assessment practice

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- **To get involved: contact me or complete this brief form: cutt.ly/assessment-survey**

~THANK YOU~

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