

***The Last Taboo:
Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Law in Canadian Libraries***

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In an age when even mainstream television programming includes lesbians and gays and when same-sex marriage is the talk — and now the law — of the land, what are the social responsibilities and legal obligations of librarians and trustees in Canada to address changing realities? This session explores library policy issues of services and access to print and Web resources for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning Canadians, especially Canadian youth with limited resources.

Handouts:

- Table, Recent LGBTQ fiction for teens in Canadian urban public libraries (from Boon and Howard, *Collection Building* 2004).
- Table, Books for LGBTQ teens and children in Alberta public libraries: large urban centres (file *Checklist study of Alberta public libraries 2006 - by library*)
- Table, Books for LGBTQ teens and children in Alberta public libraries: a checklist study, 2006 (File *Checklist study of Alberta public libraries 2006 - by title*)
- Strategies for supporting LGBTQ communities
- Why we don't have any LGBTQ-related materials in our library.... (from Gough, *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* 1990, and Gough and Greenblatt, *Library Journal* 1992)
- LGBTQ checklist studies and service issues in Canadian public libraries — recommended references
- Chart 3, Percent of health sites blocked by filters at the most restrictive setting, by topic (from Kaiser Family Foundation 2002, at <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/Chart-Pack.pdf>)
- Major LGBTQ filtering studies — recommended references. (from “From movie codes to web filters — ‘same old, same old’: technologies to suppress, distort, manipulate, marginalize, and silence LGBTQ diversity”)

Recent LGBTQ Fiction for Teens in Canadian Urban Public Libraries*

	LGBTQ Teen Fiction Titles	
	<i>Number (/35)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Edmonton	32	91%
Vancouver	32	91
Toronto	30	86
Ottawa	28	80
Saskatoon	28	80
Halifax	23	66
Regina	22	63
Winnipeg	22	63
Victoria	21	60
<i>Average</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>76%</i>

* Titles from 1998-2002 used by Boon and Howard, *Collection Building* 2004, 133-138.

Books for LGBTQ Teens and Children in Alberta Public Libraries: Large Urban Centres, 2006*

Titles per Library				
	<i>Titles Held Number (/52)</i>	<i>Titles Held Percent</i>	<i>Municipal Pop'n</i>	<i>Titles per 1000 capita</i>
Calgary Public Library	38	73	956,078	0.04
Edmonton Public Library	38	73	712,391	0.05
Grande Prairie Public Library	34	65	44,631	0.76
Medicine Hat Public Library	27	52	56,048	0.48
Lethbridge Public Library	26	50	77,202	0.33
Red Deer Public Library	25	48	79,082	0.31
St. Albert Public Library	25	48	56,310	0.45
Strathcona County Library	23	44	55,063	0.48
Camrose Public Library	20	39	15,669	1.33
Fort McMurray Public Library	19	37	60,983	0.31
Spruce Grove Public Library	16	31	18,405	0.89
Averages	26	51%		0.5
Titles per Capita				
	<i>Titles per 1000 capita</i>	<i>Municipal Pop'n</i>	<i>Titles Held Number (/52)</i>	<i>Titles Held Percent</i>
Camrose Public Library	1.33	15,669	20	39
Spruce Grove Public Library	0.89	18,405	16	31
Grande Prairie Public Library	0.76	44,631	34	65
Medicine Hat Public Library	0.48	56,048	27	52
Strathcona County Library	0.48	55,063	23	44
St. Albert Public Library	0.45	56,310	25	48
Lethbridge Public Library	0.33	77,202	26	50
Red Deer Public Library	0.31	79,082	25	48
Fort McMurray Public Library	0.31	60,983	19	37
Edmonton Public Library	0.05	712,391	38	73
Calgary Public Library	0.04	956,078	38	73
Averages	0.5		26	51%

*Alvin M. Schrader (first presented at the Alberta Library Conference, Jasper, Alberta, 28 April 2006)

Books for LGBTQ Teens and Children in Alberta Public Libraries: A Checklist Study, 2006

At least one copy of title held at: (in descending order of total title holdings within Alberta)			Library systems serving the 11 largest urban centres in Alberta											Sub-total (/11)	Total Alberta public libraries holding this title:	
			CPL	EPL	RDPL	LPL	SAPL	FMPL	SCL*	MHPL	GPPL	SGPL	CamPL			
Title	Author	Date														
1	True Believer	Wolff, V. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	63
2	Bad Boy	Wieler, D. 1989	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	58
3	Touch of the Clown	Huser, G. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10	53
4	The Game	Toten, T. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	44
5	The Misfits	Howe, J. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10	31
6	Postcards from No Man's Land	Chambers, A. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	31
7	The Perks of Being a Wallflower	Chbosky, S. Freymann- 1998	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	30
8	My Heartbeat	Weyr, G. 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10	29
9	Telling	Matas, C. 1998	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	29
10	Box Girl	Withrow, S. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	27
11	Hard Love	Wittlinger, E. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	25
12	Deliver Us from Evie	Kerr, M.E. 1994	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	24
13	Eight Seconds	Ferris, J. 2000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	22
14	Odder than Ever	Coville, B. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	21
15	I Was a Teenage Fairy	Block, F.L. 1998	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	20
16	One Hot Second: Stories about Desire	Young, C. (ed.) 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	18
17	Empress of the World	Ryan, S. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	17
18	What's in a Name?	Wittlinger, E. 2000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	15
19	Keeping You A Secret	Peters, J.A. 2003	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	14
20	Rainbow Boys	Sanchez, A. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	14
21	Kissing Kate	Myracle, L. 2003	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	12
22	Love & Sex: 10 Stories of Truth	Cart, M.(ed.) 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	12
23	Geography Club	Hartner, B. 2003	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	11
24	Out of the Shadows	Hines, S. 1998	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	11
25	From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun	Woodson, J. 1995	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	10
26	The Year They Burned the Books	Garden, N. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	10
27	Dare Truth or Promise	Boock, P. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	9
28	Good Moon Rising	Garden, N. 1996	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	7
29	Name Me Nobody	Yamanaka, L. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	7
30	If It Doesn't Kill You	Bechard, M. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	6
31	Jack	Homes, A.M. 1989	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	6
32	The Blue Lawn	Taylor, W. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	5
33	Love Rules	Reynolds, M. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	5
34	Finding H.F.	Watts, J. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	3
35	Flamboyant	Swados, E. 1998	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	3
36	Gravel Queen	Benduhn, T. 2003	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	3
37	Jerome	Taylor, W. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	2
38	Just Like Beauty	Lerner, L. 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	2
39	November Ever After	Torres, L. 1999	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	2
40	Rumors and Whispers	Levy, M. 1990	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	2
41	SP Likes AD	Brett, C. 1989	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	2
42	Tomorrow Wendy: A Love Story	Stoehr, S. 1998	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	2
43	When Heroes Die	Durant, P.R. 1992	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	2
44	Calendar Boy	Quan, A. 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	1
45	War Boy	Hillsbury, K. 2000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	1
46	The World of Normal Boys	Soehnlein, K.M. 2000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	1
47	Girl Walking Backwards	Williams, B. 1998	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0
PICTURE BOOKS																
1	Losing Uncle Tim	Jordan, M.K. 1989	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	11
2	Heather Has Two Mommies	Newman, L. 1989	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	10
3	Asha's Mums	Elwin, R. 1990	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	7
4	Daddy's Roommate	Willhoite, M. 1990	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	4
5	The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans and Other Stories	Valentine, J. 1991	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0
TOTAL HOLDINGS BY LIBRARY			38	38	25	26	25	19	23	27	34	16	20			

Strategies for Supporting LGBTQ Communities

Board Policies

- review board philosophy, mandate and mission, legislative frameworks, esp. *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and library association policy statements to highlight social responsibility

Community Development

- use community development approaches to build inclusive, responsive, and collaborative libraries
- seek out and listen to local LGBTQ communities
- develop and maintain relationships with gay-straight student alliances (GSAs) and other local LGBTQ groups such as PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)

Professional Networking

- develop relationships and a support network with other librarians, teachers, counselors, police, social workers, parents, and other community leaders

Selection Criteria

- establish inclusive selection guidelines and practices that go beyond selection canon
- identify LGBTQ-related areas for collection development such as travel, consumer information, same-sex marriage, parenting, youth issues, picture books, adoption, homelessness, violence, ethnic minorities
- include alternate formats
- develop procedures for obtaining input from teachers, students, parents and other community members

Reconsideration of Materials

- frame policies and procedures in accord with the Canadian Libraries Association's *Statement on Intellectual Freedom*

Collection Development

- consult bibliographies, "best" books lists, award lists, multiple review sources, and the alternative press
- seek out bibliographies and reference lists produced by LGBTQ organizations and communities

Collection Access

- adopt a user-centred approach to classification and cataloguing and ensure fiction and non-fiction are catalogued under an imaginative diversity of user-friendly subject headings
- materials should be visible, accessible, and available beyond the normal checkout process
- **note:** no consensus exists on the impact or success of labeling LGBTQ-themed books with rainbow stickers

Web Access

- ensure Internet filtering software does not exclude LGBTQ sites and information, which would otherwise violate non-discrimination laws and library policies — better yet, avoid filtering for teens and adults
- develop acceptable use policies with user training and parental awareness information and training
- endorse and distribute the Canadian Libraries Association's brochure *Have a Safe Trip! A Parent's Guide to Safety on the Internet* (<http://www.cla.ca/netsafe/netsafe.pdf>)

Library Access

- promote the library as a "safe space," through signage and other communications
- use inclusive language in all library communications and on websites

Promotion and Marketing

- maintain an LGBTQ presence on the library website, including bibliographies, new titles alerts, and links to relevant websites including those of other libraries and LGBTQ organizations
- include LGBTQ titles in displays, book talks, presentations, communications
- promote awareness of local events and national issues of LGBTQ interest, e.g., same-sex marriage, parenting, adoption, bullying awareness, violence, literacy, homelessness, Mother's and Father's Days, and support *National Day Against Homophobia* (www.homophobiaday.org) held annually on May 17
- promote *Freedom to Read Week* (www.freedomtoread.ca) annually in February as well as local initiatives

Community Advocacy

- establish working relationships with local media and engage in well-planned public education programs to inform constituencies about the library's mission to tackle social exclusion and intellectual freedom

Professional Development

- expand your knowledge of LGBTQ issues and information resources by attending conferences, staying current with research, and fostering cultural awareness training for other staff, volunteers and trustees

Seize the teachable moment!

Why we don't have any LGBTQ-related materials in our library*....

- *Young library users are not searching for gay and lesbian materials.*
- *My library doesn't provide materials geared to specialized needs.*
- *Gay people don't live in my community. At least they don't seem to use my library.*
- *Aren't most of those materials too technical for most libraries?*
- *It's too difficult to find reviews of these materials. How can I tell what's worthless and what's worthwhile? And those materials require ordering from special vendors.*
- *I don't feel qualified to order these materials.*
- *My library's vendor doesn't handle those items.*
- *Can't people just use interlibrary loan to get these materials instead of my having to buy them?*
- *I'm uncomfortable with what some of these materials are about.*
- *That stuff doesn't belong in libraries—at least not in my library.*
- *I don't approve of homosexuality or of homosexuals.*
- *My library can't afford gay/lesbian materials.*
- *Librarians handle all library materials, including those dealing with sexual orientation, equally and neutrally.*
- *The library's books about AIDS adequately address the information needs of its gay and lesbian patrons.*
- *Buying library materials for gay and lesbian library users endorses the way these people live.*
- *We don't need special booklists or indexes; gays and lesbians can use the catalogue and periodical indexes like anyone else.*
- *We simply haven't yet found the time to devote attention to covering this particular subject area.*

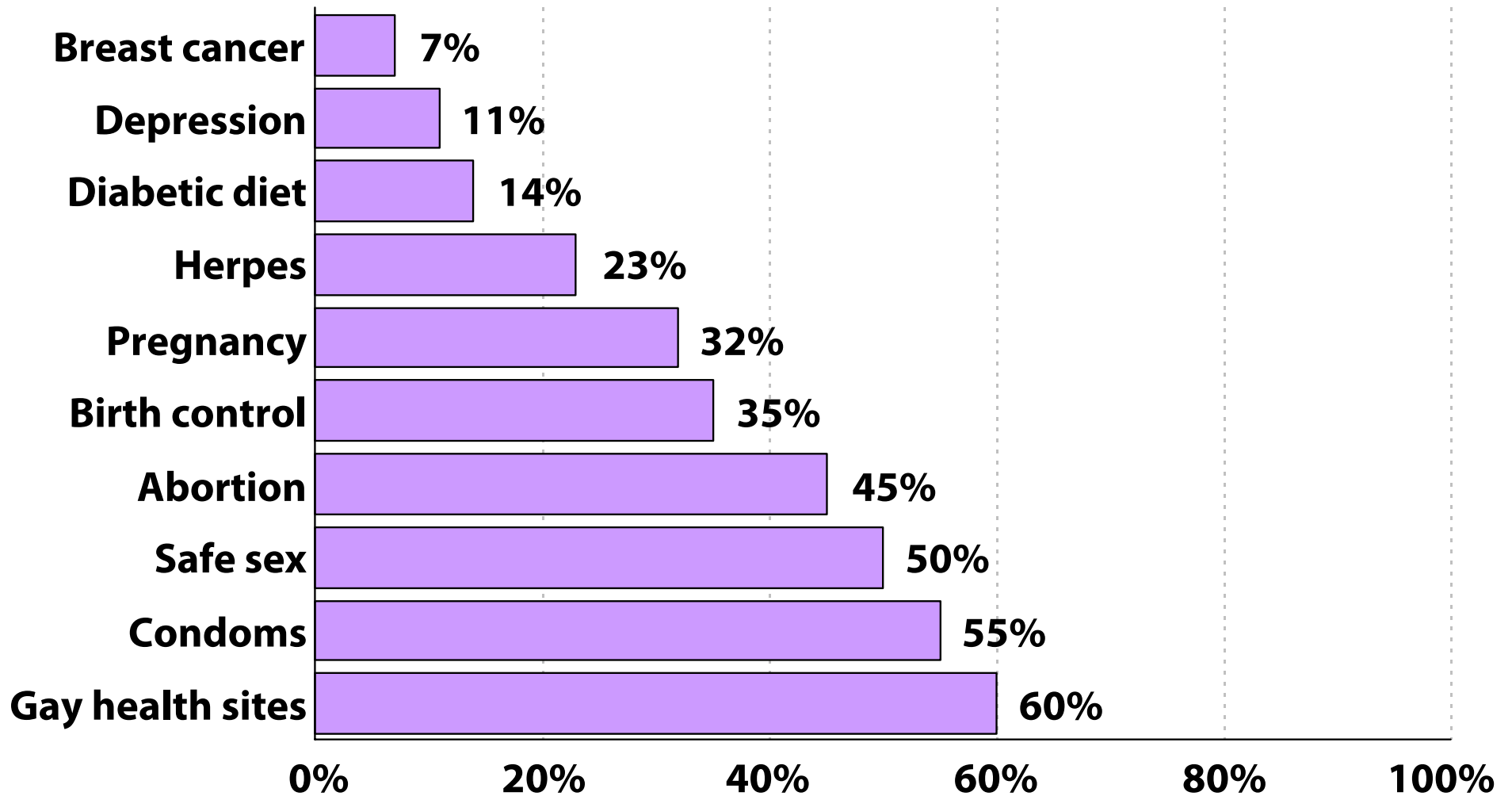
* "Key Issues in the Collecting of Gay/Lesbian Materials" by Cal Gough in *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* (McFarland, 1990). Also, "Services to Gay and Lesbian Patrons: Examining the Myths" by Gough and Greenblatt. *Library Journal* 117.1 (January 1992): 59-63.

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Chart 3

Percent of health sites blocked by filters at the most restrictive setting, by topic



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, *See No Evil: How Internet Filters Affect the Search for Online Health Information*, December 2002.

***From Movie Codes to Web Filters— "Same Old, Same Old":
Technologies to Suppress, Distort, Manipulate, Marginalize, and Silence LGBTQ Diversity***
(a presentation to the Inside/Out Speakers' Series, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta (rev. June 2006))

Web filtering software is one contemporary strategy for imposing cultural conformity where LGBTQ diversity would otherwise flourish and quite possibly frighten the horses on Canadian streets. Among categories of objectionable content and images most frequently targeted by filtering products are lesbian and gay Web sites — not surprising given the conservative bias of most of the U.S. software producers. Critics of filtering software often focus on its current technological limitations, because filters both overblock and underblock. But a more persuasive critical approach is grounded in the very nature of human language itself and its indexing. Continuing examination is needed of the censorware phenomenon and its cultural limitations if we are to maintain even guarded optimism about access to LGBTQ content and images on the Web.

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