The USA PATRIOT Act:
What Libraries Should Do NOW and ALWAYS
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NOW: Check your library’s policies
✓ Do you have a privacy policy in place?
✓ Are your procedures up-to-date?
✓ Do you staff understand and follow your policy and procedures?
✓ Do all your board members (or institution administrators) know about and understand your policy?
✓ Has your attorney reviewed your policy and procedures?
✓ Is someone assigned to monitor the literature and news to keep your staff current on privacy and intellectual freedom issues?

NOW: Do a privacy audit
✓ What patron records are kept in each department?
✓ Are patron records (other than basic identification information) on a destruction schedule?
✓ Are you destruction schedules being followed?
✓ Are all the records that are kept necessary?

NOW: Check with other units that might have access to patron records to determine if they are also in compliance with your policy
✓ Are there “hidden” records, even after you delete items?
✓ Do their routines respect patron privacy?

NOW: Records to review
✓ Circulation transaction logs
✓ Cookies and certificates
✓ Document delivery and interlibrary loan transactions
✓ Library web server logs, including proxy servers
✓ Mail message files and server logs
✓ OPAC search logs
✓ Overdue and billing records
✓ Paper sign-up sheets
✓ Personalization profiles and other service offers for personal information (histories of searches, SDI services, lists of favorite authors or topics, etc.)
✓ Public workstations’ browser caches and history files
✓ Public workstations’ browser “Bookmarks” or “Favorites”
✓ Purchase requests
✓ Records of access to electronic reserves
✓ Records of items placed on Reserve or Hold
✓ Records or logs of electronic reference services (chat or e-mail)
✓ Records of questions and answers
✓ Remote web sites, including content providers, outsourced web hosting, proxy servers, etc.
✓ Saved search histories and sets SDI profiles
✓ System logs
✓ Usage statistics

**ALWAYS: What libraries should do regularly**
✓ Review and update policies and procedures
✓ Review policies and procedures with new employees and continuing employees
✓ Audit records
✓ Spot check that policies are followed
✓ Warn patrons about taking responsibility for their own privacy

**ALWAYS: Principles to live by**
✓ Keep only those patrons records necessary for library operations
✓ Resist the temptation to keep records “just in case”
✓ Keep patron records only as long as absolutely necessary
✓ Allow access to patron records only by court order
✓ Remove personally identifiable information from records if possible

**NOW and ALWAYS: Check out the literature on the USA PATRIOT Act, privacy, intellectual freedom, and related issues:**


