

5C—PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND VALUES 1: PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATIONS #2

In Search of Library Philosophy

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Libraries—even academic ones—tend to be oriented to practice, perhaps at the expense of theoretical bases. However, there has been a small but ongoing side conversation about library philosophy. A philosophy of librarianship raises the essential questions around the library's reason for being, which are often overlooked in what feels like a mad scramble to keep up, to champion efficiency, to demonstrate the value of libraries in a quantifiable way, and to be all things to all user groups, that characterize librarianship in the 21st century. As we move into the future, philosophical inquiry may help us examine our assumptions, establish priorities, inform future directions and decisions, and communicate our value in society. This presentation will be an exploration of philosophical inquiry around librarianship, albeit by a non-philosopher, with a view to tracing our philosophical roots and repositioning important questions in our profession's thought and discourse.