



# Pluralism in Libraries

## POINTS OF DEPARTURE

### Libraries and the constitution of knowledge.\*

Libraries operate in a network of **epistemic institutions** necessary to sustain liberal democratic societies which value intellectual, cultural, and political diversity.

Libraries create conditions for

- pluralistic knowledge generation
- building social trust
- civic engagement
- shared civic culture.

Libraries face multifaceted challenges including

- library resource challenges (“book bans”) and silent censorship
- content warnings and other “prejudicial labeling”
- increase in activist scholarship and practice
- declining practitioner support for intellectual freedom and institutional neutrality.

\**The Constitution of Knowledge: A Defense of Truth* by Jonathan Rauch  
([search.worldcat.org/title/1256712726](https://search.worldcat.org/title/1256712726))

## POINTS OF DISCUSSION

### Libraries as partners

- What challenges to pluralism are you experiencing or observing in your local community (academic, professional, civic, etc.)?
- How can your local library enhance pluralism in your community?
- How can you partner with your library on these challenges?

### Libraries and the epistemic commons

- What is the role of libraries in the epistemic crisis?
- How can libraries help us navigate
  - mis-/dis-/malinformation,
  - synthetic (AI-generated) media, and
  - other contemporary challenges of the epistemic commons?
- How can libraries practice and promote epistemic virtue?

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## EXPLORE OUR WORK

# Open Inquiry Toolkit

Learning design resources to foster **intellectual virtues** as countermeasures to **cognitive biases** in higher education.

1. Curriculum resources
  - a. Course design guide
  - b. Assignment design guide
  - c. Course discussion guide
2. Self-study materials for educators
3. Repository of open-licensed teaching and learning materials (open educational resources or OERs)

The Open Inquiry Toolkit was made possible in part with support from the Mercatus Center's Pluralism and Civil Exchange micro-grant program.



Access online:  
[sites.psu.edu/openinquirytoolkit](https://sites.psu.edu/openinquirytoolkit)



## *Heterodoxy in the Stacks*

Writings on intellectual freedom, library neutrality, and libraries in democracy by contributors from **Heterodox Libraries**.

- *Wicked Problems and Comprehensive Doctrines: Interventionism and Social License in Librarianship*
- *How Big is Libraries' Insider Threat Problem?*
- *Bonfire for the Humanities?*
- *Make Book Bans Boring Again*
- *Conservatives Censor Where It Counts*



Access online:  
[hxlibraries.substack.com](https://hxlibraries.substack.com)



Access this one-pager online:  
[sites.psu.edu/openinquirytoolkit/workshop/events/#pluralismsummit2024](https://sites.psu.edu/openinquirytoolkit/workshop/events/#pluralismsummit2024)