

A PROJECT BY:
 **FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE**

AUTHORS FOR LIBRARIES

Hundreds of authors are speaking out on behalf of libraries, demanding that publishers and trade associations put the digital rights of librarians, readers, and authors ahead of shareholder profits.

Authors, inclusive of poets, academics, and those yet to be published, are encouraged to sign on to this statement in solidarity with libraries, asking that major publishers do not sue, intimidate, or smear libraries and librarians for preserving and expanding access to knowledge and stories of diverse experience.

Letter Text

Libraries are a fundamental collective good. We, the undersigned authors, are disheartened by the recent attacks against libraries being made in our name by trade associations such as the Association of American Publishers and the Publishers Association: undermining the traditional rights of libraries to own and preserve books, intimidating libraries with lawsuits, and smearing librarians.

We urge all who are engaged in the work of getting books into the hands of readers to act in the interests of all authors, including the long-marginalized, midlist, and emerging authors whom librarians have championed for decades. We write to ask that all publishers, distributors, and trade associations:

- 1. Enshrine the right of libraries to permanently own and preserve books, and to purchase these permanent copies on reasonable terms, regardless of format.** Many libraries would prefer to own and [preserve](#) digital editions, as they have always done with print books, but these days publishers [rarely](#) offer them the option. Instead, when libraries have [access to ebooks](#)

at all, the prices libraries pay to rent ebooks are often likened to extortion.

Digital editions are more affordable to produce and often more accessible, but libraries are already relying on emergency funds and may only be able to license a small selection of mainstream works in the future. In turn, readers will have fewer opportunities to discover the more diverse potential bestsellers of tomorrow.

It is past time to determine a path forward that is fair to both libraries and authors—including a perpetual model for digital ownership based on the cost to maintain a print edition.

- 2. End lawsuits aimed at intimidating libraries and diminishing their role in society.** The interests of libraries are the interests of the public, and of any author concerned with equity and longevity for themselves and their fellow writers. We are all on the same side. Yet a unanimously passed Maryland state law ensuring libraries pay “reasonable fees” for digital editions died after the AAP sued. And after a previous suit failed, several publishers are currently suining the Internet Archive Library in an

attempt to prohibit all libraries from [lending out scanned copies of books they own](#). While undermining libraries may financially benefit the [wealthiest and most privileged authors and corporations](#) in the short term, this behavior is utterly opposed to the interests of authors as a whole.

- 3. End smear campaigns against librarians.** Recent comments likening library advocates to “[mouthpieces](#)” for Big Tech are as tasteless as they are inaccurate. Also concerning are the [awards](#) recently given to legislators who have advocated in favor of the [dangerous surveillance](#) of [library patrons](#), and of laws that [criminalize librarians](#). As a [last bastion of truth, privacy, and access to diverse voices](#), libraries’ digital operations grow ever more essential to our society—and their work should be celebrated, not censured.

We fear a future where libraries are reduced to a sort of [Netflix](#) or [Spotify](#) for books, from which publishers demand [exorbitant licensing fees](#) in perpetuity while unaccountable vendors [force the spread of disinformation and hate](#) for profit. Publishers must balance profits for the most prominent authors and shareholders with the

right of the public to free, [unsurveilled](#) access to knowledge and information—as well as the right of emerging authors to be collected, preserved, and discovered.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned

Sign the Letter

Neil Gaiman

Alok Vaid-Menon

Yesika Salgado

Chuck Wendig

Mark Bray

Tom Morello

Naomi Klein

Mattie Lubchansky

Kyle Lukoff

Hanif Abdurraqib

Stephen D. Crocker

Annalee Newitz

Cameron Awkward-Rich

Molly Crabapple

Torrey Peters

Hugh Ryan

Cory Doctorow

Baratunde Thurston

Margaret Killjoy

Alyssa Milano

Saul Williams

Barry Eisler

Max Collins Eve6

Franny Choi

Sadie Dupuis

Lawrence Lessig

Daniel Ellsberg

Medea Benjamin

Lynne Thompson

Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg

Laurie Penny

Marianne Díaz Hernández

Eli Valley

Roger McNamee

Lilly Wachowski

Amanda Palmer

David Wain

John Markoff

Ayesha Muzaffar

Sam Sax

Binx R Perino

Michelle Ruiz Keil

Evan Selinger

alex benedict

Diana Rosen

Julianna Douglas

Ryan Eckes

Hank Bromley

Danez Smith

Javon Johnson

R.M. Haines

Amalia Tenuta

Michelle M. Wu

Rachel Castro

— — — — —

Brittany Collins

gabriel juan membreno

Nathan Schneider

Jazzib Akhtar

Emma C. Eisenberg

Sarah Perchikoff

Camonghne Felix

Mahogany L. Browne

Hieu Minh Nguyen

Kim Kelly

Christine Cock

Elizabeth Metzger Sampson

Jean M Russell

Dinah Sanders

— — — — —

Miles Klee

Erik Leroy

Harold Feld

Denice Frohman

Mahi Seid

Lia Holland

Laura Gibbs

Jonathan Rosenberg

Jake Flores

Ashia Ajani

Omkari Williams

Liza Lin

Jason M. Karakehian

Dan Gillmor

Olivia Gatwood

Wendy Seltzer

Katrine Buch Mortensen

Jonathan Poritz

Brough Turner

Jeremy Hawkins

Diannely Antigua

Alex Worrell

Carrie Baize

Joanne McNeil

Keith Ammann

Mon M

Brink Lindsey

Talia Rothschild

Rachal Marquez Jones

Larry O. Dean

Elizabeth Kate Switaj

Eula Biss

Ernie Smith

Sasha Costanza-Chock

Rebecca Giblin

Glyn Moody

D.J. Sylvis

Robin Marty

Joy Young

Diana Khoi Nguyen

Mirta Wake

Spencer Ackerman

Prisca Dorcas Mojica Rodríguez

Aarati Kasturirangan

Sangodare Julia Wallace

Trevor Timm

Laura Stanfill

Mackenzie River Foy

Anindita Sengupta

Scott Carney

Kay Savetz

Féi Hernandez

Shanna Hollich

Liz Duffy Adams

Margaret Gel

Harsha Walia

Ted Scheinman

Lucy Bernholz

Philip Metres

Jonathan Mendoza

Robert Berger

David S. Isenberg, Ph.D.

Julian Randall

Deborah J. Knuth Klenck

Alexandra Kohn

David Weinberger

Ari Honarvar

Jessica Bandler

Prof. Dr. Ellen Euler

Andrew Revkin

Helge Høivik

Margaret Gel

George Abraham

Juheia Kim

Ross Hernández

Jonathan M. Katz

Mary Wilson

Nancy Levinson

Kimberley Scribe

David Wondrich

Ilana Masad

Saul Aguiar

Mason Granger

david joseph

Sascha Meinrath

Micah Sifry

Sam Rush

Matthew L. Jones

Douglas Rushkoff

Patrick Roche

Robin DeRosa

Gustavo A. Rivera

Kora Schultz

Jillian York

Howard Besser

Bill Lattanzi

Tatiana Johnson-Boria

Ola Faleti

Chris Costello

Rahul Tongia

K. L. Mitchell

C. Russell Price

Karlin Lillington

Jerry Michalski

Denise Nicholson

Steven K. Stroh

Mike Masnick

Dominick Knowles

Isaac Ginsberg Miller

Ashton Applewhite

Lisa Low

Joshua Nguyen

Merrill Cole

Clayton M. Cunha Filho

Brucer Schneier

Brian Jackson

Catherine Bolten

Chris Tilly

John Detweiler

Gabrielle Civil

Oona Hatton

Jacob Saenz

Joan Donovan

Morgan Parker

David B. Chandler

Raina J. León

Emma McDonell

Ricardo Dominguez

Ilana Gershon

David Klein

Jill Godmilow

Tarfia Faizullah

Porsha Olayiwola

Brittany Rogers

Farrell Greenwald Brenner

Sean O'Brien

francine j. harris

Jennifer M. Fitzgerald

Shanelle Gabriel

avery r. young

Henry H. Perritt, Jr.

torrin a. greathouse

Tara Betts

Ching-In Chen

Porsha Olayiwola

Danuta Hinc

Imani Elizabeth Jackson

Sascha Meinrath

Shailja Patel

Jeff Sharlet

William Evans

Raych Jackson

Theo Priestley

Porochista Khakpour

John Palfrey

Bryan Byrdlong

Cyrée Jarelle Johnson

Jamila Woods

Alice Rothchild

Evie Shockley

Alex Gladstein

Andrea Chalupa

Kate Willett

Dylan Tweney

BJ Mendelson

Adrienne Lawrence

Jessie Daniels

Erin Taylor

Mona Eltahawy

Kate Bornstein

Andre Henry

Sarah Combellick-Bidney

Kon Karapanagiotidis

Tim Shorrock

Beth Ann Fennelly

Debernierre Torrey

Rebecca MacKinnon

Harry Hochheiser

Amy Sample Ward

Joss Sheldon

Scott Dworkin

Kate O'Neill

Matt Haig

Brian Cuban

John Comaroff

Jeffrey Skoller

Cameron Russell

Catherine Cusick

Noah Theriault

Jenn Budd

Mike Godwin

David Roth

Steven W. Thrasher, PhD

Kaitlin Chan

Nikita Gill

John Pavlovitz

Edward M. Hubbard

Michelangelo Signorile

Bryn Grey

Rich Levy

Elise Ficarra

Aurielle Marie

Maria Pinto

Natasha Huey

Mark Gibbons

Zin E. Rocklyn

Nicolas J. S. Davies

Kembrew McLeod

Rory Fanning

Amanda Joy

Noel Quiñones

Dujie Tahat

Leslie Reese

Erin Hill

Mahogany L. Browne

Emily Bieniek

Daniel Clarkson Fisher

Norman Solomon

Shaun Richman

David Swanson

Taylor Sanchez Guzman

Autumn Whitefield-Madrano

Chip Gibbons

Demetrius Amparan

Dan Beeton

Zenaida peterson

Paul Eisenberg

Dana Mele

Amy Banks MD

Freddie Kölsch

Lynne Nugent

John Cayley

Rafael J. González

Ricardo Dominguez

Fabio Castillo

Misty Prostko

John Ohno

John Francis

Amanda Glassman

Barbara Fister

Tracey Lambe

Mee Ok Icaro

Hayley Brown

Gabriella Coleman

Benjamin Jackson

Andrea Vocab Sanderson

Kevin Kantor

Matty Selman

Maureen Johnson

Sarah Diamond

G. B. Gabbler

AJR Smith

Kim Werker

Cole AKA Netscape 😊

Kurian Thottupuram

CJ Paloma

John Elrod

Diego Olivas Arana

Linda Brown

Edwin Bodney

Ajanae Dawkins

Gabrielle Bates

Kristina Kim

Rosemarie Dombrowski

Jacinda Townsend

CocoEva

Leonora Tindall

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Aaron Perzanowski

Jaki Shelton Green

Golden

Bianca Phipps

Jonathan Jacob Moore

Pages Matam

Luther Hughes

Sierra DeMulder

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Kimberly Nguyen

Meredeth Turshen

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Josée

Emeritus Professor Tricia David

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Marjorie Glazer

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Eleanor Roffman

Bob Stuart

Len Mitchell

Taran Trinnaman

Brima Seck

Leslie Seefeldt

Michael Lee

Megan Prelinger

Rondori Gosamashita

Dylan Young

Mona Lisa Saloy

Melissa Nolas

Emma Robinson

Francisco Javier Barrera

Gordon Dymowski

Alecia Marie Magnifico

Dorothea Salo

Eric Vilas-Boas

Maria Bustillos

Gregory Cherlin

Eugenie de Rosier

Tyler Dilts

Jean-Pierre Moundou

Joshua Bloch

Peter Suber

Dominic Lowery

Johannah White

Jen Kramer

Guy LeCharles Gonzalez

Kelley

Paul D. Callister

Robin Rose Bennett

Sarah T. Roberts

Barbara M. Waxer

Michael Blackwell

Gareth Halfacree

Jerry Weinstein

April Streeter

Christie Wilson

Phil Parkman

Celerian Rainquest

John Leubsdorf

Jeanann Verlee

Stephanie Kate Strohm

martin bidney

Deborah Thelen

A. H. Machine

Sin à Tes Souhairs

Andrew Griffin

Jane Hosie-Bounar

Ellis Weiner

Leon Osinski

Rachel Cheesman

Martin Laufe

Abram Himmelstein

Lanre Akinsiku

Brooke Hunter

Casper Parks

Tim Lambert

Lucas Scheelk

Ash Van Otterloo

James Hannaham

Gabriel Cortez

Celeste Pewter

rochelle spencer

Jessica B

Dirk van Nouhuys

William Hemphill

Rhoda Levine

Jacqui Germain

Sheila Rubin

Denise Rosemary Nicholson

Iulia Erdmann

Eberhard Ortland

Glyn Moody

Dame Darcy

Eric Botts

Ertuğrul İnanç

Harry Josephine Giles

Carla Power

Michael Thériault

Prisca Mojica Dorca Rodriguez

Marilyn Stasio

kim wooten

Tammy Vitale

Jesse Parent

SP Mulroy

What signatories are saying

Author Chuck Wendig said: “Libraries and librarians are champions of both the under-served reader and the under-seen writer. I used to work in the public library, and I cherished that the library helped writers find readers, and readers to find writers — and writers of every level, to boot, from midlist or bestseller or debut. It is vital we make sure these seeds are planted, watered,

and allowed to grow unhindered.”

Author Cory Doctorow, whose forthcoming book Chokepoint Capitalism with fellow signatory Rebecca Giblin explores the harms of big content to creators, said: “Anyone who tells you libraries and authors are on the opposite side of *any* issue has grossly misunderstood the nature of libraries, or authors, or both. We are class allies and artistic comrades-in-arms.”

Author, PEN/Hemingway award winner, and first trans woman nominee for the Women’s Book Award Torrey Peters said: “I flat-out owe my career as a trans author to the unimpeded circulation of digital books: the first trans books that inspired me were digital, my own first books were published digitally. Book stores didn’t carry our books at first. Therefore, any readers that have felt their own emotions changed by my published work—no matter in what medium—ultimately also owe that change to digital books. Everybody benefits when digital books are accessible.”

Poet Yesika Salgado said: “Without libraries my peers and myself wouldn’t have had the access to literature that we identify with and encouraged us to tell our own stories. To restrict their abilities to loan books is to stifle voices like ours ”

New York Times bestselling author Scott Carney said: “Libraries are a vital

institution to cultivate engaged readers. Allowing them to carry books in formats that readers actually use only helps authors. Not allowing libraries to function puts the control of reading into the hands of big tech companies.”

Author Marianne Díaz Hernández said: “Libraries are the guardians and the bulwark of cultural diversity and inclusion, particularly for those who don’t have the means to access culture by other pathways. They are the place where people, particularly children, can access books and other materials about the topics that concern them, embarrass them, or that they don’t feel that they can talk with anyone else. The status of libraries as a place free of censorship and surveillance, to seek knowledge we need and stories that reflect us, is one of the keystones of a free, open, and democratic society, and every inch that we lose in this battle contributes to the disintegration of civic space.”

Author Prisca Dorcas Mojica Rodríguez and founder of Latina Rebels said: “Libraries should be protected, it is how I first discovered my love of reading. There is no me the author without public libraries.”

Author Elizabeth Kate Switaj said: “I write because I want to be read. My most recently published book is on the Internet Archive—and that delights me. I also make use of online archival material frequently in my creative and

critical work. Moreover, as a college administrator in a small-island state (or, more accurately, a Big Ocean Nation), I know how important electronic resources are to global access and equity.”

Dan Gillmor, author and cofounder of News Co/Lab, an initiative to elevate news literacy and awareness at Arizona State University’s Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, said: “Big Publishing would outlaw public libraries if it could — or at least make it impossible for libraries to buy and lend books as they have traditionally done, to enormous public benefit — and its campaign against the Internet Archive is a step toward that goal.”

Award-winning author David Weinberger said: “Publishers trying to limit the reach of libraries are hastening the death of literacy, of book culture, and of community pride in their educated differences.”

Author, and Faculty Affiliate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society Sasha Costanza-Chock said: “It’s absolutely shameful that publishers would try to destroy the efforts of the Internet archive. The future is open access publishing!”

Author Ernie Smith said: “Closing off libraries to fair access in the digital age closes off one of the most important tools for research we have. The Internet

Archive's controlled digital lending approach is an excellent way to quickly research topics from primary sources that may not have digital equivalents. The library should be allowed to reasonably keep up with the times, and we should not allow publishers to attempt to redefine it just because the format is changing."

Award-winning poet and Guggenheim Fellow Philip Metres said: "The public library, to me, is the closest thing to a church for everyone—a place where people seek stories and answers to every question under the sun. Those who threaten that sacred space, who seek to reduce access to that temple of learning and exploration, are a danger to democracy itself."

Author Mirta Wake said: "Retracting the ability to read from the poor will not net you more sales, it will simply limit the reach that your work could have. Libraries that lend e-books tend to require those borrowing to have devices to read them on, while the electronic lending of books as if they were physical ones via a PDF allows you to access the book no matter what device you are using to read on. Furthermore taking down Internet Archive and forcing all into physical libraries to borrow physical books fails to account for a) the mobility status of the borrower (are they even able?) and b) the availability of libraries in their area in the first place as more and more libraries disappear off the map to never re-appear ever again."

Author and Professor of Media Theory and Digital Economics at CUNY/Queens Douglas Rushkoff said: "Libraries rule. They are the clearest example of a commons that we can point to."

Author Ashton Applewhite said: "Preserving traditional library rights is essential for free speech and the transmission of information in the digital age."

Author Diana Rosen said: "Eternal vigilance is essential not for our democratic principles but for access to information, the key to an informed and responsive public. Long live our public libraries!"

Author Alex Benedict said: "Growing up in Brecksville, Ohio, my local parks system and library were my refuges. Beyond demanding that libraries be able to purchase books for permanent use in any format as well as be protected from lawsuits and harassment, I hope that small presses can establish closer relationships with libraries. Cleveland publisher and poet d.a.levy freely shared his books with many libraries across and beyond Ohio. Although many libraries may be resistant to alternative forms of literature, small presses and authors can set an example against conglomerate publisher financialization by taking sharing books with libraries."

Poet and co-organizer Jonathan Mendoza said: "I want a future in which

authors and artists are fairly compensated for their work and where their works can still be affordable and accessible to everyone most affected by capitalism and inequity. Libraries, and their ability to lend e-books in a reasonable manner, are key to this outcome. The ever-more-common profit-driven efforts of major publishers to drive up the cost to access literature should distress us all. I encourage authors to join this letter in support of libraries and of the more equitable and accessible future that our works so often seek to build.”

Engineer, VTuber, comedian, voice-over artist, digital content creator, and author Margaret Gel said: “Humanity will never be free, never colonize the stars, never advance as a species, as a people, as a civilization, as long as information remains shackled by Capitalism.”

Author and retired University of Oklahoma Professor Laura Gibbs said: “I make sure to upload all the books for which I control the rights to the Internet Archive: it’s the library I use most, and I am proud to see my books there.”

Prof. Dr. Ellen Euler said: “Libraries are crucial for a functioning democratic knowledge society. In times of multi-crises and populist propaganda, they should be able to fulfill their mission in the best possible way, including via digital and networked media!”

Author and poet Dominick Knowles said: "Solidarity with library workers, archivists, and all those who make public knowledge possible against the privatizing forces of capital."

Author Robert Berger said: "Enough of Corporations trying to shove Artificial Scarcity down our throats!"

Author Steven K. Stroh said: "The Internet Archive is an absolute treasure of the modern era. As an author, I want my works to be made widely available to the public, in perpetuity, through non-commercial organizations such as Internet Archive."

Author Jerry Michalski said: "Through their overzealous overprotection of intellectual property, the copyright industries have set civilization back considerably. Profit maximization and collective intelligence are at odds with each other."

Author Ricardo Dominguez said: "Free Archives are the only manner of making sure that information will be available to all people now and in the future. We cannot fully depend on current and developing platforms for pay-only access to make knowledge available to all."

Author Chris Tilly said: "Libraries are a cornerstone of democracy. They are

at their best when they introduce people to new ideas, so it is critical that they present diverse views and experiences, and provide a wide range of published work.”

Sean O’Brien of Yale Privacy Lab said: “Just as the printing press and pamphleteers democratized the sharing of text and artwork centuries ago, we must fight to ensure that 21st Century reading and sharing includes creation and dissemination of digital copies as well as backups of books. Libraries are a public institution we should cherish, and librarians must be supported in their mission to archive and distribute public knowledge and creative works.”

Poet and writer Raina J. León said: “Ideas, imagination, compassion, community are the ways of life. Let us walk with that alignment and attunement!”

Poet and Pulitzer Finalist Evie Shockley said: “Let libraries & librarians do their job! As someone who couldn’t afford to buy even a fifth of the books I hungrily read growing up, I find it devastating to see the limitations that digital books are placing upon what library patrons will have access to.”

Author Jeff Sharlet said: “Libraries saved my life as a young reader, and I’ve seen them do as much and more for so many others. At a time when libraries are at the frontlines of fascism’s assault on democracy, it is of greater

importance than ever for writers to stand in solidarity with librarians in defense of the right to share stories. Democracy won't survive without it."

Author Erin Taylor said: "The Internet Archive is a public good. Libraries are a public good. Only the most intellectually deprived soul would value profit over mass access to literature and knowledge."

Author Kate Bornstein said: "I grew up in the 1950s and 60s. There was no internet, but there was the Asbury Park Public Library. That's where I discovered books about the Weimar Republic, Magnus Hirschfeld, and American ex patriots living in Paris. I learned the word invert, and I knew that was me. It was a public library that laid open my horizons. with today's attacks on LGBTQ people, we need libraries now more than ever."

Author Mike Godwin said: "When you consider how many library patrons will become (or already are) lifetime book buyers, the shortsightedness of the publishers who attack libraries and librarians is stark. Fortunately for the rest of us, the librarians by temperament and training are used to taking the long view. America, I'm putting my geek shoulder to the wheel in support of librarians. (The librarians will quickly catch the allusion.)"

Author Zin E. Rocklyn said: "We must support libraries, librarians, and what they stand for: the freedom of diverse education."

Author Andrea Vocab Sanderson said: "Representation is so important. Empowering people to share their narratives with the largest audience possible will be the most impactful for all generations."

Author Rafael J. González said: "Libraries are sacrosanct keepers of the word; nothing must stand in the way of their sacred function."



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