Director’s Institute – 2018.09.28

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Next catalog contains information about patrons that is considered confidential including names, contact information, and, in some cases, the familial relationships. Confidential library information also includes the names of items that a patron has borrowed from the library, records concerning computer use, and requests/overdue/fines/fees information and notices.

The 3 typical recommendations for reducing the risks of a breach of confidentiality are A) reduce the amount of confidential information collected by the library; B) destroy confidential information as soon as possible after it is no longer needed; C) establish policies and procedures protecting the confidentiality of library records and train staff on those policies and procedures.

Currently Next collects a fairly small amount of information that needs to be kept confidential. We also have processes in place to delete confidential information on a fairly regular basis. And we have a system-wide “Patron Privacy and Confidentiality Statement” which is supposed to be read and signed by every staff member/volunteer who has access to the shared catalog.

In areas B and C, we could do better and some tools are being built to help in these areas. Items 1-7 in this list are features that will be available in Koha soon because of GDPR compliance, and #8 is something we are working on at the NEKLS office.

1. Staff will have the ability to edit a patron's privacy settings from the staff client (2019)
2. Default privacy rule will change from “Default” to “Never” for new patrons (2019)
3. Request history will have controls similar to reading history (2019-2020)
4. There will be a 1-click method for staff to anonymize and delete a patron (2019)
5. A method may become available for patrons to self-delete their accounts from the OPAC if they have no checkouts, fees, requests, or guarantees (2020)
6. A 1-click method for patrons to download all of their private data from the OPAC will be available (2019)
7. More non-identifiable information will be moved to the statistics tables so that we can track statistical data without having to connect the statistics back to patron records (ongoing)
8. NEKLS staff are working on an online course for learning about Privacy and Confidentiality that will be available, hopefully, as soon November or December of this year