

ALA supports WIPO treaty

ALA supports the Treaty for the Blind, a treaty that would allow international book lending to print-disabled people—including those who are blind, have low vision, are dyslexic, have a learning disability or other disability that prevents them from accessing print—by promoting an exception to copyright law. The exception would ask WIPO member nations to establish a national exception that authorizes the making of accessible copies. This copyright exception would be similar to the Chafee Amendment in U.S. copyright law. In addition, the exception would allow countries to share accessible copies (Braille, large print, digital formats like accessible e-books) across borders. Negotiations are reaching a fever pitch with many powerful corporations, including General Electric, Exxon, and the motion picture and publishing industries, opposing the treaty.

ALA staff moderate School, Health and Libraries Broadband Conference

ALA and libraries were well-represented at the School, Health and Libraries Broadband Conference, with OITP Assistant Director Marijke Visser and OITP Fellow Bob Bocher leading a session on policy implications of the e-rate funding shortage; Denise Hendlmyer from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission speaking on a broadband adoption plenary panel; Jamie Hollier with PLA's DigitalLearn.org; Corinne Hill, executive director for the Chattanooga Public Library, on the "What To Do with a Gig" panel.

ALA calls for accountability and transparency in nation's surveillance laws

ALA was gravely concerned, but unfortu-

nately not surprised, at the June revelation that the U.S. government obtained the phone records of all Verizon (and maybe other telephone companies) and Internet companies' customers for the last seven years.

ALA called upon Congress to provide more accountability and transparency about how the government is obtaining and using vast amounts of information about innocent people.

"The library community welcomes a renewed public debate on how to balance the need to fight terrorism and the need to protect personal privacy and civil liberties," said ALA President Maureen Sullivan.

ALA's response follows media reports that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) has every three months, for seven years, been renewing a Section 215 order to obtain phone records of all Verizon customers. The FISC is a secret court authorized to issue such orders under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. In a public hearing, Senator Diane Feinstein (D-California) indicated that the order identified in news reports is just a "regular" renewal of an order that started seven years ago.

ESEA reauthorization bill introduced in U.S. Senate

The Strengthening America's Schools Act, a bill that would reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was introduced in the United States Senate. S 1094 is a huge victory for libraries as it creates a specific provision for school libraries and implements the Improving Literacy and College and Career Readiness through Effective School Library Program. The bill is the first to recognize the role school library programs play in student learning since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first enacted in 1965. *rw*

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