

“Don’t Say Gay” in the State of Tennessee: Libraries as Virtual Spaces of Resistance and Protectors of Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) People

Bharat Mehra

School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, United States.
bmehra@utk.edu

LaVerne Gray

School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, United States.
lgray7@utk.edu



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Abstract:

In recent years the geographic state of Tennessee in the United States has acquired a national notoriety and shameful reputation as a toxic place on issues of sex and gender (Mehra 2011; Mehra and Braquet, in press; Mehra and Braquet, 2011; Mehra and Braquet, 2007a, 2007b; Mehra and Braquet, 2006), especially owing to the infamous “Don’t Say Gay” bill that thankfully died a second death when lawmakers failed to pass the measure banning elementary and middle-school teachers from discussing sexual activity that is not “related to natural human reproduction” (Ford, 2013; McDonough, 2013; Staff Reports, 2013). In the light of such failed, yet repressive and homophobic efforts, how are the state’s school, public, and academic libraries representing the needs and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people in providing web access and coverage of information related to this marginalized population in a region that proudly identifies itself as the buckle of the conservative Bible-belt in the United States. This paper highlights findings from an exploratory website study to identify key trends, best practices, and case representations across different types of library environments of LGBTQ information resources, collections, programs, and services. It shows how library agencies around the state have the potential to serve as virtual spaces of resistance and protectors of human rights of LGBTQ people against the dictates of hegemonic, prejudiced, and hateful regime representatives and unjust laws.

Keywords: Library as a Safe Space; Promoting Inclusion; Collection Development

1.0 Introduction

In recent years the geographic state of Tennessee in the United States has acquired a national notoriety as a toxic place on issues of sex and gender (Mehra 2011; Mehra and Braquet, 2011; Mehra and Braquet, 2007a, 2007b; Mehra and Braquet, 2006), especially owing to the infamous “Don’t Say Gay” bill that thankfully died a second death in March 2013 when lawmakers failed to pass the measure banning elementary and middle-school teachers from discussing sexual activity that is not “related to natural human reproduction” (Ford, 2013; McDonough, 2013; Staff Reports, 2013). In the light of such failed, yet repressive and homophobic efforts, how are the state’s academic, public, and school libraries representing the needs and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people in providing web access and coverage of information related to this marginalized population in a region that proudly identifies itself as the buckle of the conservative Bible-belt in the United States? This paper highlights findings from an exploratory website study to identify key trends, best practices, and case representations across different types of library environments of LGBTQ information resources, collections, programs, and services. It shows how library agencies around the state have the potential to serve as virtual spaces of resistance and protectors of human rights of LGBTQ people against the dictates of hegemonic, prejudiced, and hateful regime representatives and unjust laws.

2.0 The Context of LGBTQ Shame in Tennessee

Historically, a denial of equal rights and fair representation, prejudice, and institutionalized discrimination are considered a violation of human rights (Clapham 2007; Hunt 2008). Recent political, cultural, social, and media attention have dragged LGBTQ experiences to the forefront of the human rights debate at local, regional, national, and international levels (Benoit, 2013; Faucheux, 2003). For example, on December 6, 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton took a giant step for the United States foreign policy by declaring in front of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, that it is a “violation of human rights” to commit violence or discrimination against people because of their sexual orientation (The Huffington Post, 2011). Along the same vein, President Barack Obama recognized that lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT) rights are human rights, and his administration has translated this understanding into concrete action (e.g., secured justice for all under the Matthew Shepard and James Bryd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, repealed the inhuman “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in the military, made efforts to end housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, expanded hospital visitation rights for LGBT patients and their loved ones, and ensured that insurance companies no longer deny coverage to someone just because they are LGBT under the Affordable Care Act, to name a few): this is helping to “broaden opportunity, advance equality, and level the playing field” for LGBT people while continuing “to engage with the international community in promoting and protecting the rights of LGBT persons around the world” (Obama 2012).

However, such a national and international commitment to promote progressive changes for LGBTQ people in the United States has not translated positively in a similar manner at the state and local levels. In Tennessee, in addition to the efforts of select state legislative members to curtail LGBTQ vocabularies in the K-12 schools (mentioned above), similar strategies to deny representation of LGBTQ information via bullying and threatening efforts were recently made by some state legislators at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, the flagship state institution of higher learning, that has aspirations “to achieve its potential among the nation’s preeminent research universities” envisioned in its *Vol Vision 2015: Pursuit of the Top 25* plan (University of Tennessee, n.d.). During spring 2014 Tennessee lawmakers threatened to get a series of bills passed in the state legislature that aimed to radically prevent the University of Tennessee system from hosting guest speakers and to change how student activity fees were allocated to campus organizations (Kingkade, 2014). The legislation was designed in response to the University of Tennessee-Knoxville’s Sex Week event—organized and funded by students—which lawmakers found inappropriate for college-going students. “If those people who organize this thing want to have it, hey, let them get off campus,” state Rep. Richard Floyd (R-Chattanooga), the primary sponsor of the resolution, told the Chattanooga Times Free Press, and added: “They can go out there in a field full of sheep if they want to and have all the Sex Week they want” (Sher, 2014). In spite of such verbal aggressions, Sex Week took place for an entire week in March, 2014, and included discussions about women’s health, sexual relationships and sexuality, LGBT issues, hook-up culture and sexual violence, in addition to a cooking class, poetry slam, drag show, and a “Sexy Oscars Party.” More than 4,000 people had attended the event last year in 2013, when similar hostilities and threats from lawmakers led to the University of Tennessee-Knoxville rescinding some financial support of the event and private donations were used to compensate for the last-minute funding cut. After much closed-door wheeling and dealing this year and letters from the University of Tennessee system President Joe DiPietro and various faculty members to state Sens. Dolores Gresham (R-Somerville) and Mike Bell (R-Riceville), as well as other legislative leaders, the bills were ultimately dropped. For it seemed an agreement with university administrators was reached for students to be able to opt out of paying activity fees going toward potentially controversial events. DiPietro outlined the university’s argument that it did not have constitutional grounds to stop Sex Week from taking place and adding that “Our efforts will continue to be subject to the requirements of the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment” (URL: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/215119485/March-10-letter-from-UT-System-President>).

3.0 Libraries as Spaces of Resistance

When denial of human rights takes place at the political level with involvement of state representatives to systematically target specific groups and exert pressures to pass bills that legitimize and legalize bigotry and intolerance towards already disenfranchised populations (Hedges, 2008), the consequences are disastrous and reach the level of “war crime” proportions in a non-military situation (Evans, 2006). For bullying tactics adopted by state legislators to introduce archaic and repressive bills that marginalize particular groups so that people in political power can tap into a conservative vote-bank and further their national political aspirations are threats to the very fabric of democracy in supporting marginalization of specific groups for personal political gain (Alexander, 2012). Further, blackmailing maneuvers by state representatives to cut down funding to state-supported educational institutions and centers of higher learning if these agencies represent certain issues or topics not in line with their

conservative belief systems become attacks that should be considered as criminal acts of aggression for they curtail intellectual freedom and the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights that prohibits the making of any law that abridges the freedom of speech (Abrams, 2006; Jasper, 1999). Why are such efforts to hijack democracy (Morey, 2013) not considered an issue of homeland security since individuals belonging to certain groups get threatened with denial of security in a home, where, as citizens of a free state they should be entitled to an expectation of safety, well-being, and equal rights as other citizens (Gonzales, 2013)?

Toni Samek (2007) challenges the notion that libraries should remain neutral in the light of such attacks on human rights around the globe and on the sacred soil of the American homeland and calls for a more proactive library leadership that leads by getting involved in promoting critical social action and community-wide progressive changes. Over the years, librarians have played a positive role model, though in limited ways, as protectors of human rights against hegemonic forces of political control, domination, and constraint (Jaeger, Gorham, Bertot, and Sarin, 2014). For example, the library profession learnt from historical reflections of its role during past times involving government suppressions of civil liberties in the years of the World War I, World War II, Early Cold War and McCarthyism, and the Late Cold War, to apply these in response to the passage of the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (USA PATRIOT Act) after the World Trade Center terrorist attacks and the subsequent introduction of heightened level of government intrusion into various aspects of ordinary life, including library use (Starr, 2004). Adopting practices that were evolutionary over a period of time, the American Library Association (ALA) (2003) codified a three-fold response to the Act that included: (1) Education about how to comply with the Act, understand the inherent dangers to intellectual freedom, and, adopt and implement patron privacy and record retention policies; (2) Collaborate with other like-minded organizations to protect civil rights of inquiry and free expression; (3) Obtain and publicize information about the surveillance of libraries and library users by law enforcement agencies. Further, ALA developed a range of possible responses and support for local agencies to address challenges that might arise during everyday library activities (ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2004). Individual responses of libraries included destroying Internet access logs on a daily basis, posting privacy-loss warning signs, offering patron education on the issues, non-cooperating with law enforcement requests for patron information and Internet use, and developing appropriate staff training practices (Estabrook, 2003; Sanchez, 2003). In the age of the Internet, the possible role of libraries in providing virtual spaces of resistance and a cyber-civic space to challenge political and religious bigotry has now expanded tremendously (Lees, 1997; Lim, 2002). With the use of Library 2.0 technologies (e.g., blogs, wikis, social networking sites, etc.), libraries of all kinds are connecting with their patrons in new ways; furthering communication and information exchanges that lead to exchange of ideas, dialogue and debate; providing patrons opportunities to socially interact with each other; and facilitating citizen involvement in progressive democratization processes (Casey and Savastinuk, 2007; Courtney, 2007). Are there some lessons from past library activism in the use of the Internet and other initiatives that librarians in Tennessee can apply to resist the political pressures and threats by select state representatives?

4.0 The Library Context in Tennessee

The Tennessee State Library and Archives consists of nine multi-County regions serving 211 small and medium-sized public libraries throughout Tennessee. See Figure 1 for distribution map of Tennessee's geographically defined regions.

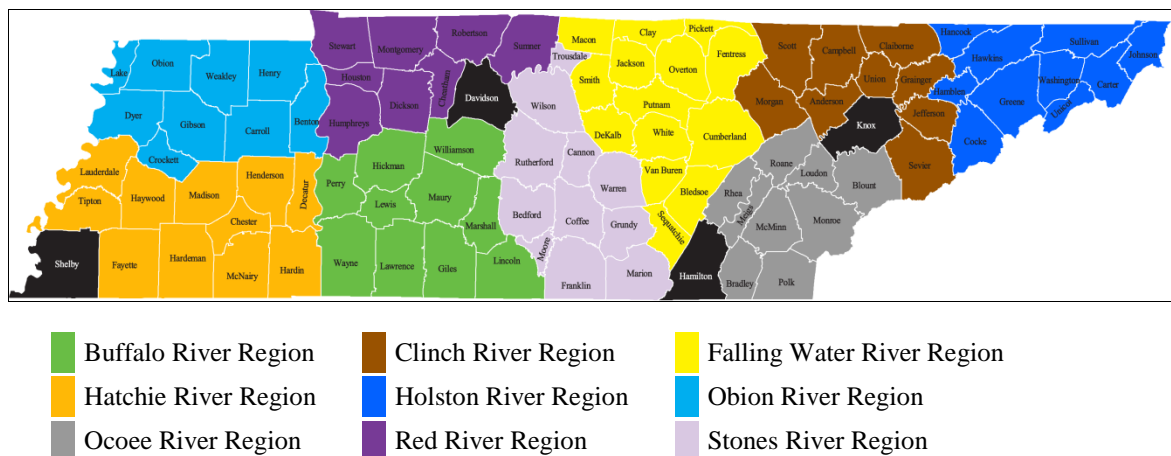


Figure 1: Map of Tennessee's regions [Source: Tennessee State Library and Archives.
URL: <http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/regional/regional.htm>]

Tennessee's Regional Library System has been in existence since 1939 and its mission is [URL: <http://www.tn.gov/tsla/regional/regional.htm>]: (1) To provide supplementary library materials to member public libraries; (2) To assist local governments in public library development and expansion; (3) To provide continuing education to local library staff and trustees; (4) To assist in the selection and maintenance of library technology; (5) To provide library services to the disadvantaged who have difficulty using local public libraries. A rural public library in Tennessee is defined as one that does not belong to any of the four metropolitan public library systems in the state (i.e., Memphis Public Library, Knox County Public Library System, Nashville Public Library, and the Chattanooga- Hamilton County Bicentennial Public Library). Tennessee's nine regions also contain academic and school libraries and this paper provides a count based on the library type for the region it is located in (see Table 1).

Sixty-nine of the 95 counties in Tennessee are considered rural (Appalachian Resource Network, 2013). The rural library systems and individual library agencies in these areas are in a pivotal role to shape the lives of their community members (Mehra, Singh, and Parris, 2010; Mehra, Black, Singh, and Nolt, 2011a; 2011b). Rural libraries are often the only place providing accurate, authoritative, and current information resources, in addition to a reliable and high-speed Internet connection unavailable in other parts of the rural community (Mehra, Black, and Lee, 2010; Mehra, Black, Singh, and Nolt, 2011c). As a result, rural libraries become potential bastions of life-saving information for LGBTQ patrons in these regions struggling to cope with

the social stigma surrounding their sexuality; they can also serve as people's places to address ignorance and challenge homophobic responses towards LGBTQ populations that have traditionally been marginalized in the rural and conservative heartland of the United States (Mehra and Braquet, in press; Mehra and Srinivasan, 2007).

5.0 Research Methods

5.1 The Dataset

The dataset used in this research consisted of the websites of all academic, public, and school libraries in Tennessee. A list of these libraries was first compiled from the website of the TennShare Library (URL: <http://www.tenn-share.org/>) under its membership link (URL: <http://www.tenn-share.org/membership>). This list was extended and finalized on January 20, 2014, by integrating searchable data set by county and region from a collection entitled "Public Library Directory" from the Tennessee State Library and Archives website (URL: <http://tnsos.net/TSLA/PLD/index.php>). Notes identifying unique features of the website and the provision of a site search box were made during the data collection efforts.

5.2 Search Strategy

The website of each academic library (AL), public library (PL), and school library (SL) in Tennessee was searched for the occurrence of vocabularies and terminologies associated with LGBTQ information. Keyword terms that were related to sexual orientation and LGBTQ content were used (e.g., "sexual minority" "gay," "lesbian," "LGBT/GLBT," "homosexual," etc.) to identify the kinds of information made available on these websites. Irrelevant information was discarded.

For the ALs multiple strategies were adopted: (1) Each site was searched using Google with the following string command: [LGBTQ term: e.g., "LGBT"] site: [Library URL]. The results retrieved were reviewed for validity of content. (2) If the AL website contained a site search box for the library or college/university that was also used employing relevant LGBTQ terminologies and the results were reviewed to check for relevant information and if the information was contained within the library's website. For the PLs the search strategy (identified above) via Google was used, in addition a library site search (if applicable) or system site search was conducted using LGBTQ vocabularies. For the SLs similar strategies were adopted, in addition to identifying and using a school/library/district/County site search to locate the library website link as applicable in select cases. For the websites with positive results the content was assessed to categorize the information located according to the four elements discussed below.

5.3 Framework of Elements

The following four elements (E1, E2, E3, and E4) were used to evaluate and categorize the LGBTQ content found on the library websites:

E1: Connections [Internal]: This included information about centers and organizations, non-profit/private/government-based/educational units internal to the agency that provided access [physical and/or intellectual], delivery of services, and/or programs related to the LGBTQ categories in the library and/or community. It also included information presented about news [within the past one year] that took place within the agency and internal community engagement activities and events related to the LGBTQ categories.

E2: Connections [External]: This included information about centers and organizations, non-profit/private/government-based/educational units external to the agency in the local, regional, and national communities that provided access [physical and/or intellectual], delivery of services, and/or programs related to the LGBTQ categories. It also included information presented about news [within the past one year] that took place outside the agency and external community engagement activities and events related to the LGBTQ categories.

E3: Policy and planning: This included LGBTQ representations on diversity-related committees and contact information of members assigned as LGBTQ representative on a committee, LGBTQ representation on strategic planning documents (e.g., diversity statement which is a publicly available description acknowledging the library's commitment to the LGBTQ categories, inclusion in strategic plan (e.g., diversity plan) in terms of inclusion of LGBTQ categories in the library's strategic planning process, and/or inclusion of specific LGBTQ descriptions for the present and/or future directions of growth in the Mission/Vision/Values/About Us statements that were seen as representation of the library identity).

E4: Information Sources: This included LGBTQ-related collections, both print and/or electronic, such as monographs and periodicals, web portals, exhibits (e.g., LGBTQ in arts, online and physical exhibits), etc. It also included resources such as LGBTQ databases and print indexes, research guides, etc. Also, included were job opportunities, funding options such as list of scholarships, paid work opportunities (internships), and fellowships relevant to LGBTQ patrons.

These elements represented the information-related functionality that was offered by the agency.

6.0 Findings

Table 1 identifies the number of libraries by type in Tennessee's nine regions and four metropolitan areas. The proportion of libraries with a website is also indicated. Of the 706 libraries identified in Tennessee 545 agencies (77.2%) had a website. Fifty-six of the 57 academic libraries (98.25%) had a website forming 10.28% of the total number of agencies with websites that were studied. Two hundred and forty-three of the 295 public libraries (82.37%) had a website forming 44.59% of the total number of agencies with websites that were studied. Two hundred and forty-six of the 354 school libraries (69.49%) had a website forming 45.13% of the total number of agencies with websites that were studied.

<i>Name of Region</i>	<i>Academic Libraries (AL)</i>		<i>Public Libraries (PL)</i>		<i>School Libraries (SL)</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Total (AL)</i>	<i>With a Website</i>	<i>Total (PL)</i>	<i>With a Website</i>	<i>Total (SL)</i>	<i>With a Website</i>	<i>Total (AL/PL/SL)</i>	<i>With a Website</i>
Buffalo River Region	2	2	27	23	16	16	45	41
Clinch River Region	2	2	37	27	5	5	44	34
Falling Water River Region	2	2	22	16	2	1	26	19
Hatchie River Region	4	4	19	17	1	1	24	22
Holston River Region	4	4	29	24	17	14	50	42
Ocoee River Region	6	6	27	16	5	4	38	26
Obion River Region	3	3	20	16	5	4	28	23
Red River Region	2	2	13	13	9	9	24	24
Stones River Region	3	3	26	17	31	31	60	51
<i>Metropolitan Area</i>								
Chattanooga-Hamilton County	4	4	7	7	12	8	23	19
Knoxville-Knox County	6	5	19	19	83	82	108	106
Memphis-Shelby County	9	9	22	22	26	23	57	54
Nashville-Davidson County	10	10	27	26	142	48	179	84
Total	57	56 (98.25%)	295	243 (82.37%)	354	246 (69.49%)	706	545 (77.2%)

Table 1: The number of libraries in Tennessee with a website.

Table 2 summarizes the number of libraries (based on type) in Tennessee representing LGBTQ information based on the occurrence of E1, E2, E3, and E4 on their websites. ALs led with representing a total of 27 individually occurring elements out of 38 (71.05%) while PLs followed with a total of 10 individually occurring elements (26.32%) and SLs followed with a total of one individually occurring element on their agency websites (2.63%). E4 information was the most popular form with a total of 19 agencies representing it on their websites while E3 information was the least popular with two agencies representing it on their websites.

<i>Element</i>	<i>Academic Libraries</i>	<i>Public Libraries</i>	<i>School Libraries</i>	<i>Total</i>
Element 1	7	2	0	9
Element 2	7	1	0	8
Element 3	2	0	0	2
Element 4	11	7	1	19
Total	27 (71.05%)	10 (26.32%)	1 (2.63%)	38

Table 2: The number of libraries (based on type) in Tennessee representing LGBTQ information on their websites.

Table 3 lists the ALs in Tennessee whose websites represented LGBTQ information in terms of at least one of the elements. There were only two of the 11 ALs (i.e., University of Tennessee Libraries and Jean and Alexander Heard Library at the Vanderbilt University) (18.18%) whose websites contained representative information of all the four elements. Five of the 11 ALs (45.45%) had websites that contained representative information of three elements. The remaining 4 of the 11 ALs (36.36%) had websites that contained representative information of only one element (i.e., E4).

<i>Institution Name</i>	<i>Library Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Elements</i>
Austin Peay State University	Felix G. Woodward Library	Montgomery County, Clarksville	http://library.apsu.edu	1-E4
Bethel University	Bethel University Library	Carroll County, McKenzie	http://bethelu.libguides.com/library	1-E4
Chattanooga State Community College	Augusta R. Kolwyck Library	Chattanooga, Hamilton County	http://library.chattanoogastate.edu	3-E1, E2, E4
East Tennessee State University	Sherrod Library	Johnson City, Washington County	http://sherrod.etsu.edu	3-E1, E2, E4
Maryville College	Lamar Memorial Library	Maryville, Blount County	http://library.maryvillecollege.edu	3-E1, E2, E4
Middle Tennessee State University	James E. Walker Library	Murfreesboro, Rutherford County	http://library.mtsu.edu/	3-E1, E2, E4
Northeast State Community College	Wayne G. Basler Library	Blountville, Sullivan County	http://apps.northeaststate.edu/library	1-E4
Tennessee State University	Brown Daniel Library	Nashville, Davidson County	http://www.tnstate.edu/library/	1-E4
University of Memphis	University Libraries	Memphis, Shelby County	http://www.memphis.edu/libraries	3-E1, E2, E4
University of Tennessee	University of Tennessee Libraries	Knoxville, Knox County	http://www.lib.utk.edu	4-E1, E2, E3, E4
Vanderbilt University	Jean and Alexander Heard Library	Nashville, Davidson County	http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu	4-E1, E2, E3, E4

Table 3: The academic libraries in Tennessee representing LGBTQ information on their websites.

Table 4 lists the PLs in Tennessee whose websites represented LGBTQ information in terms of at least one of the elements. None of the PL websites contained representative information of all the four elements. Only one of the seven PL websites (i.e., Memphis Public Library & Information Center) (14.29%) contained representative information of three elements.

<i>Library Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Elements</i>
Henderson Public Library	Hendersonville, Sumner County	http://hendersonvillelibrary.org/	1-E4
Jefferson City Public Library	Jefferson City, Jefferson County	http://jeffCountylibraries.org/	1-E4
Knox County Public Library System	Knoxville, Knox County	http://www.knoxlib.org	2-E1, E4
Library Service For Deaf & Hard of Hearing (Nashville PL)	Nashville, Davidson County	http://www.library.nashville.org	1-E4
Memphis Public Library & Information Center	Memphis, Shelby County	http://www.memphislibrary.org	3-E1, E2, E4
Nashville Public Library-Main	Nashville, Davidson County	http://www.library.nashville.org	1-E4
Nashville Talking Library (Nashville PL)	Nashville, Davidson County	http://www.library.nashville.org	1-E4

Table 4: The public libraries in Tennessee representing LGBTQ information on their websites.

Table 5 lists the SLs in Tennessee whose websites represented LGBTQ information in terms of at least one of the elements. None of the SL websites contained representative information of more than one element. One SL website (i.e., Hedges Library at The Baylor School) contained representative information of one element (i.e., E4).

<i>School, Library Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Element</i>
The Baylor School, Hedges Library	Chattanooga, Hamilton County	http://www.baylorschool.org/student-life/hedges-library/index.aspx	1-E4

Table 5: The school libraries in Tennessee representing LGBTQ information on their websites.

7.0 Discussion Based on Library Type

This section discusses the relevance of the findings based on the library type and the display of LGBTQ vocabularies associated with any one or more of the elements (identified above) on the library website. Brief case representations of the agency are highlighted in its representation of any of the elements across the three types of library environments. They serve as best practices to represent such information or LGBTQ vocabularies for other agencies to model, replicate, and/or provide alternative strategies.

7.1 Academic Libraries

The Augusta R. Kolwyck Library (URL: <http://library.chattanoogaastate.edu>) at the Chattanooga State Community College in Chattanooga, Hamilton County, integrated some E1, E2, and E4 information on its “LGBT Pride Month” Library Research Guide (LibGuide) (URL: <http://libguides.chattanoogaastate.edu/lgbt>), also listed under “Reference” (URL: <http://library.chattanoogaastate.edu/Reference.pdf>). On such LibGuides research assistance, subject guides, and other useful resources were compiled by friendly librarians. This LibGuide contained

websites (URL: <http://libguides.chattanooga.state.edu/content.php?pid=213332&sid=1775156>) that included some E1 information such as local sites (e.g., Tennessee Transgender Political Coalition, Mid-South Pride) (URL: <http://libguides.chattanooga.state.edu/content.php?pid=213332&sid=1775156>), in addition to some E2 information such as access to websites of LGBTQ national sites (e.g., *American Library Assn. GLBT Roundtable*, <http://www.ala.org/glbtrt/>; *Equality Forum*, <http://www.equalityforum.com/>). Additional E2 information included LGBTQ-related “News” at the national level (e.g., “D. C. Celebrates and Pride Month in June” at URL <http://georgetown.patch.com/groups/editors-picks/p/dc-celebrates-pride-month-in-june>) and at the regional level (e.g., “Gay Pride Flag Flies at Federal Reserve Bank of Virginia” at URL: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/federal-reserve-bank-of-virginia-flies-gay-pride-flag-50807/>). “Books in the Library” (URL: <http://libguides.chattanooga.state.edu/content.php?pid=213332&sid=1775153>) provided select E4 information with five titles and links to their catalog records (e.g., *Ask & Tell: Gay and Lesbian Veterans Speak Out* by Steve Estes, 2007; *Beyond Straight and Gay Marriage : Valuing All Families Under the Law* by Nancy D. Polikoff, 2008). Access to LGBTQ “eBooks” (e.g., *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why: The Science of Sexual Orientation*, *Greenwood Encyclopedia of LGBT Issues Worldwide*) and “LGBT Literature & Book Reviews” (e.g., *Lambda Literary*, <http://www.lambdaliterary.org/>; *GLBT Reviews* by the American Library Association Roundtable, <http://www.glbtrt.ala.org/reviews/>) were also provided. Four films on demand (e.g., *Being Gay: Coming Out in the 21st Century*) and access to their catalog records and two videos (e.g., *President Obama Signs Repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell*, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2010/12/22/president-obama-signs-repeal-don-t-ask-don-t-tell>) were also included (URL: <http://libguides.chattanooga.state.edu/content.php?pid=213332&sid=1775155>).

The Brown-Daniel Library (URL: <http://www.tnstate.edu/library/>) at the Tennessee State University in Nashville, Davidson County, provided an example of E4 information in including the “Gender Studies” and “Gender Watch” databases under Women’s Studies with LGBTQ descriptors in its list containing materials that were subject to Copyright Laws (U.S. Code Title 17) (URL: http://www.tnstate.edu/library/databases_subject.aspx).

The Felix G. Woodward Library (URL: <http://library.apsu.edu>) at the Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Montgomery County, provided an example of E4 information in its results that identified LGBT databases retrieved via use of the site’s search box (URL: <http://library.apsu.edu/hoopertest/searchresults.htm?cx=XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX%3AAYYYYYYYYYYYY&cof=FORID%3A11&q=lgbt&sa=Search>). For example, the “LGBT Life with Full Text” was listed under the broad subject of Literature (URL: <http://library.apsu.edu/m/subjects/subLit.html>) and Sociology (URL: <http://library.apsu.edu/m/subjects/subSociology.html>) and made available for mobile devices.

The Jean and Alexander Heard Library (URL: <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu>) at the Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Davidson County, provided E1, E2, E3, and E4 information on its website. Under its “Political Science/Government Information: Public Policies Issues and Groups” page (URL: <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/govt/pubpol.php>) some LGBTQ topics included: “Gay and lesbian marriages” (URL: <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/ginfo-pubpol.pl?searchtext=GayMarriage&Type=LTR&Resource=DB&Website=GOVTINFO>), “Sexual orientation and family values” (URL: <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/ginfo-pubpol.pl?searchtext=Family&Type=LTR&Resource=DB&Website=GOVTINFO>), “Bullying”

(URL: <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/ginfo-pubpol.pl?searchtext=Bullying&Type=LTR&Resource=DB&Website=GOVTINFO>), “Cyberbullying” (URL: <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/ginfo-pubpol.pl?searchtext=Cyberbullying&Type=LTR&Resource=DB&Website=GOVTINFO>), and “Hate Crimes” (URL: <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/ginfo-pubpol.pl?searchtext=HateCrimes&Type=LTR&Resource=DB&Website=GOVTINFO>), amongst others. Under its “Research Guides” (URL: <http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/home>) the subject “Women’s and Gender Studies” included the following LGBTQ topics with extensive information under each heading: Women's & Gender Studies Resources (URL: <http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/wgs?hs=a>), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Studies (URL: <http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/LGBTQISTudies?hs=a>), Sexuality Research Guide (URL: <http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/sexualityresearch?hs=a>), and Womanist, Feminist, and Queer Studies in Religion (URL: <http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/wfq?hs=a>). “Vanderbilt Campus Resources” (URL: <http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/content.php?pid=36335&sid=498360>) linked to The Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Life (URL: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lgbtqi/>) under the Dean of Students as an example of E1 information. The same page linked to “Same Sex Domestic Partner Benefits” where a description of various benefits (health, dental, vision, tuition reimbursement, etc.) available to same-sex domestic partners was presented via Human Resources (URL: <http://hr.vanderbilt.edu/benefits/domesticpartner.php>) representing E3 information. An example of E2 information was available under “Law & Public Policy (UCLA’s Williams Institute Resource” (URL: <http://libguides.law.ucla.edu/williamsreadingroom>) on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Studies Research Guide. This resource also had an extensive listing of “Film Resources” representing E4 information (URL: <http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/content.php?pid=36335&sid=1512065>) that included select LGBTQ film festivals, movie scripts and scores, e-books on film studies, online resources etc.

The James E. Walker Library at the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) (URL: <http://library.mtsu.edu/>) in Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, represented much LGBTQ information on its LibGuides page entitled “SW 3200: Cultural Diversity: LGBT” (<http://libraryguides.mtsu.edu/content.php?pid=455935&sid=3923057>). This web space contained some E1 information under its “Campus/Community Resources.” These included: (1) MTSU Lambda’s personal webpage: (URL: <http://capone.mtsu.edu/mtlambda/index.php>); (2) A notice about finding Safe Zone decals on the doors or windows of a variety of offices on the MTSU campus. The purpose of such Safe Zone symbols was a way for staff members to identify themselves as allies for the LGBTQ community. Some websites of national and regional agencies (E2 information) were also included such as Campus Pride, PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), The Trevor Project (leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ youth), amongst others. Relevant information from the American Psychological Association was listed for “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns” (URL: <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/index.aspx>). E4 information from this agency was provided under “APA LGBT Publications, Reports & Resources” (URL: <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/index.aspx>). Some additional E4

information was presented under various categories such as “Historical Information” (e.g., *Off the Couches, into the Streets*), “Books from the Library” (e.g., *The Queer Encyclopedia of the Visual Arts* by Claude J. Summers, 2004; *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies* by Diane Richardson and Steven Seidman, 2002).

The Lamar Memorial Library (URL: <http://library.maryvillecollege.edu/content.php?pid=330527&sid=2703631>) at the Maryville College (MC) in Maryville, Blount County, presented a wide-ranging selection of E1, E2, and E4 information on its “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer LGBTQ Resources and Studies” LibGuide (URL: <http://library.maryvillecollege.edu/content.php?pid=330527&sid=2703631>) categorized under wide-ranging topics that included: Welcome (e.g., “What is LGBTQ?” “GLAAD Media Reference Guide: Offensive Terms To Avoid”), Maryville College Resources (e.g., “MC Organizations and Clubs,” “Useful Databases for LGBTQ Studies and Research”), History (e.g., “Web Sites Focusing on LGBTQ Histories,” “Reference Books In the Library,” “Selected Books In the MC Library”), Transgender (e.g., “Transgender Basics,” “Selected Web Sites and Descriptions”), Bisexuality (e.g. “Selected Web Sites with Descriptions,” “DVD in the Library”), Coming-Out (e.g., “The Importance of Coming-Out,” “Selected Websites on Coming Out,” “Soccer Pro David Testo Discusses Coming Out”), Hate & Homophobia (e.g., “Classic Homophobia and Hate,” “Selected Web Sites with Descriptions”), Education & Safety (e.g., “Safe Schools - Selected Web Sites and Descriptions,” “Bullying - Resources Addressing the Problem”), Faith & Religion (e.g., “LGBTQ People and the Church,” “Selected Web Sites and Descriptions”), Employment (e.g., “Why It Matters?” “Selected Books in the Library”), LGBTQ Families & Parenting (e.g., “Why It Matters?” “Selected Web Sites with Descriptions”), Marriage Equality (e.g., “The Laws Over the Years,” “Why Marriage Equality Matters”), Athletics (e.g., “College Athletics and Safety,” “Transgender Athlete - Kye Allums”), Military (e.g., “The Major Laws Over Time,” “Reactions to the Repeal of DADT”), LGBTQ Campus Life (e.g., “MC Organizations and Clubs,” “Selected Web Sites and Descriptions”), and Opposing Viewpoints (e.g., “Selected Books in the Library,” “Selected Web Sites with Descriptions”).

The Library (URL: <http://bethelu.libguides.com/library>) at the Bethel University in McKenzie, Carroll County, provided an example of E4 information in its access to the collection of online video and audio recordings of notable lectures, events, and readings available via the University of California Berkeley Media Resources Center Online Media database that provides information on LGBT History (URL: <http://libguides.bethel.edu/content.php?pid=404634&sid=3312453>).

The Sherrod Library (URL: <http://sherrod.etsu.edu>) at the East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Washington County, integrated E1, E2, and E4 information on its “Gay and Lesbian Studies” Campus Guide (URL: http://libguides.etsu.edu/Gay_Lesbian). This included a link to the campus Office of Equity and Diversity Resources and its “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Internet Resources” (URL: http://libguides.etsu.edu/equity_diversity) (E1 information), “Education Resources (e.g., GLSEN: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) (E2 information) (URL: <http://libguides.etsu.edu/content.php?pid=76233&sid=709158>), and LGBTQ websites (URL: <http://libguides.etsu.edu/content.php?pid=174439&sid=1468018>) (e.g., One Institute and Archives: The ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives houses the world's largest research library on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered heritage and concerns) (E4 information).

The University Libraries (URL: <http://www.memphis.edu/libraries>) at the University of Memphis in Memphis, Shelby County, integrated E1, E2, and E4 information on its “LGBTQ Resources” Research Guide (URL: <http://libguides.memphis.edu/content.php?pid=336755>). A link to the “Stonewall Tigers,” a student organization serving LGBTQ students, and their friends and allies, was provided (E1 information). A selection of national LGBTQ advocacy and professional organizations was provided that included the Human Rights Campaign, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, amongst others (E2 information) (URL: <http://libguides.memphis.edu/content.php?pid=336755&sid=2755100>). LGBTQ “Primary Sources Online” freely available on the web are also listed (E4 information).

The University of Tennessee Libraries (URL: <http://www.lib.utk.edu>) at the University of Tennessee (UT) in Knoxville, Knox County, provided E1, E2, E3, and E4 information on its website as retrieved via the search on the library website powered through Google (URL: https://www.google.com/search?q=lgbt+site%3Awww.lib.utk.edu&oq=lgbt+site%3Awww.lib.utk.edu&aqs=chrome..69i57.6882j1j4&sourceid=chrome&es_sm=93&ie=UTF-8#q=lgbt+site:www.lib.utk.edu&start=10). As an example of E1 information, “Diversity Activities” at the Library (URL: <http://www.lib.utk.edu/diversity/activities/>) included “Safety Zone Training: Empowering LGBT Allies” that was scheduled on February 11, 2014, and described in terms of “activities and discussion to encourage participants to reflect on their own attitudes about gender and sexuality and to become aware of different forms of discrimination faced by LGBT individuals.” Additional training was listed under “Campus Events” (URL: <http://www.lib.utk.edu/diversity/tag/training/>). An extensive “LGBT Research Guide” listed under Sociology (URL: <http://libguides.utk.edu/index>) provided access to E4 information in the form of journal, magazine, and newspaper articles; encyclopedias and dictionaries; LGBT history, databases, amongst other resources (URL: <http://libguides.utk.edu/lgbt?hs=a>). Various books and websites related to LGBTQ themes were also provided (URL: <http://libguides.utk.edu/content.php?pid=138434&sid=4132972>). An LGBTQ Research Guide in Women’s Studies (URL: <http://libguides.utk.edu/content.php?pid=80855&sid=2078821>) provided selected resources that included “Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives” and the “Kinsey Institute for Research on Sex, Gender and Reproduction” amongst others as examples of E2 information. As an example of E3 information, the contact to the Reference Librarian and Director of UT’s OUTreach: LGBT & Ally Resource Center, Donna Braquet, was provided (URL: <http://libguides.utk.edu/content.php?pid=138166>).

The Wayne G. Basler Library (URL: <http://apps.northeaststate.edu/library/>) at the Northeast State Community College in Blountville, Sullivan County, provided an example of E4 information on its website under “New Books and Materials” that listed the title *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* by Allan Bérubé (2010) providing a link to its catalog record under the subject “General World History” (URL: http://apps.northeaststate.edu/library/newbooks/process_list.php?filename=09-02-2011). Access was provided also to the database “Gender Studies Collection” (Partial Full-Text) for the subjects of Sociology and Anthropology (URL: <http://apps.northeaststate.edu/library/databases.php?subject=26>).

7.2 Public Libraries

The Hendersonville Public Library (URL: <http://www2.youseemore.com/hendersonville/>) in Hendersonville, Sumner County, provided an example of E4 information in describing Andrew Solomon's (2013) non-fiction work entitled *Far From the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity* in terms of its gay theme on its page titled "National Book Critics Circle" (URL: <http://www2.youseemore.com/hendersonville/hottitles.asp?loc=1&l=nbcc&n=National+Book+Critics+Circle>) under the "Hot Titles" tab.

The Jefferson City Public Library (URL: <http://jeffCountylibraries.org/>) in Jefferson City, Jefferson County, provided an example of E4 information in "The New York Times Best Sellers" page under "Hardcover No-Fiction" describing Andy Cohen, author of *Most Talkative: Stories from the Front Lines of Pop Culture* (2013) (URL: <http://jeffCountylibraries.org/jefferson/nytlist3.asp?tynid=937E3>).

One of the two Tennessee's public libraries representing E1 information on its website was the Knox County Public Library System (KCPLS) (URL: <http://www.knoxlib.org>) in Knoxville, Knox County. A search box on the website (not including catalog searches) retrieved one example of E1 information (URL: <http://www.knoxlib.org/search/site/lgbt>). There was information about an LGBTQ-related book-talk event entitled "Books Sandwiched In welcomes Bob Galloway" (URL: <http://www.knoxlib.org/explore-collection/books/books-sandwiched-welcomes-bob-galloway>) posted on January 14, 2014, about a discussion led by Reverend Bob Galloway, Pastor Emeritus of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), of a book "'You can tell just by looking': and 20 other myths about LGBT life and people" by Michael Bronski, Ann Pellegrini and Michael Amico, that was scheduled on February 19, 2014, at the East Tennessee History Center, one of the branches of the KCPLS. A link to information about this book (E4 information) was also provided (URL: <http://www.knoxlib.org/explore-collection/books/you-can-tell-just-looking-and-20-other-myths-about-lgbt-life-and-people>) and linked to its catalog record.

The Memphis Public Library and Information Center (URL: <http://www.memphislibrary.org>) in Memphis, Shelby County, had a search box powered by Google that retrieved select LGBTQ-related information (URL: <http://www.google.com/cse?cx=017680816488682506183%3A1dynrjvmsbw&ie=UTF-8&q=lgbt#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=lgbt&gsc.page=1>). Retrieved results represented E1, E2, and E4 information. A link to the "2013 Bookstock Authors" about library events hosted for customers to meet-greet and interact in newly-published book-signing activities with more than 40 local authors (URL: <http://www.memphislibrary.org/book/export/html/4778>) referenced reporting of LGBT news as part of author Bianca Phillips's work. More information about the author was presented at "What's New? Bookstock 2013 Authors – Moore to Phillips" (URL: <http://www.memphislibrary.org/bookstock-2013-authors/moore-phillips>). A link to the "Job Search Websites" (URL: <http://www.memphislibrary.org/joblinc/jobsearch>) provided an "LGBT Career Link" under a "General" category (URL: <http://www.memphislibrary.org/joblinc/jobsearch>) that led to "Out & Equal LBGTCareerLink," an agency in San Francisco, CA, linking diversity-friendly employers to the LGBT workforce,

job openings, and other resources (URL: <http://outandequal.org/lgbtcareerlink/>). This resource was also linked through JobLINC (URL <http://www.memphislibrary.org/joblinc-old>), a mobile Job and Career Center at the library, under “What Are Some Useful Websites?” and duplicated at the JobLINC Job and Career Center (URL: <http://www.memphislibrary.org/book/export/html/2785>).

A search box available on the Nashville Public Library’s (NPL) (Main) website (URL: <http://www.library.nashville.org>) in Nashville, Davidson County, provided access to E4 information (URL: <http://www.library.nashville.org/search/resultsgcse.asp?cx=014035815592089629706%3Axxg3n4evscq&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=UTF-8&q=lgbt&sa.x=0&sa.y=0&sa=Search&siteurl=www.library.nashville.org%2F&ref=&ss=735j185633j4>). This included information about individual LGBTQ-related titles such as “My Life as a Deaf Gay Man: And Other Stories” by Peter Beach Morier (2012) (URL: <https://tndeaflibrary.nashville.gov/material-tags/lgbt>) that was available also on the website of the Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (URL: <https://tndeaflibrary.nashville.gov/library/materials/my-life-as-a-deaf-gay-man-and-other-stories>), a special services library branch of the NPL. The Nashville Talking Library (URL: http://www.library.nashville.org/dis/dis_talking.asp) in Madison, Davidson County, another special services library branch, also provided access to this title (<https://tndeaflibrary.nashville.gov/material-tags/memoir>). Also, available was a book list under “LGBTQ History” with four titles listed (URL: <http://nashvillepubliclibrary.org/offtheshelf/book-list-lgbtq-history/>). A more extensive list was available at “Fiction about Gay Men’s Lives” (URL: http://www.library.nashville.org/bmm/bmm_books_gaymenfiction.asp) with names of gay fiction authors, some of their works, and links to their catalog records.

7.3 *School Libraries*

The Baylor School in Chattanooga, Hamilton County, was the only school in Tennessee that displayed any LGBTQ information on its website. Results from the LGBTQ Google site search included a 17-page summer reading list of 125 books entitled “Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners” (URL: http://www.baylorschool.org/PDFs/SUMMER_READING/outstanding_books.pdf) The introductory statement indicated the diversity of fiction and nonfiction works under five academic disciplines including: arts and humanities, history and cultures, literature and language arts, science and technology, and social sciences. The list was borrowed from a 2009 committee of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) in collaboration with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). The list provided an example of E4 information since it included a book, under the social studies heading, by Lisa King (2007) entitled “Out Law: What LGBT Youth Should Know About Their Legal Rights” along with a one sentence annotation. Users can access the items on the list through the Hedges Library website (URL: <http://www.baylorschool.org/student-life/hedges-library/index.aspx>).

In addition, an important note that deserves mention is that the Fulton High School, in Knoxville, Knox County had a webpage for the Gay Student Alliance (URL:http://gsa.fultonhs.knoxschools.org/modules/groups/integrated_home.phtml?gid=590324&sessionid=0408&printable=TRUE&sessionid=7df104a05601cab7b679f06929d100cf&portrait_or_landscape=portrait&sessionid=7df104a05601cab7b679f06929d100cf), whose purpose and mission included support, awareness, resources, and safety for a diverse student body. Notably, this website had a two links that represented E4 information, namely, a fiction reading list (URL: http://gsa.fultonhs.knoxschools.org/modules/locker/files/get_group_file.phtml?fid=21138517&gid=590324&sessionid=7df104a05601cab7b679f06929d100cf) and a non-fiction reading list (URL: http://gsa.fultonhs.knoxschools.org/modules/locker/files/get_group_file.phtml?fid=21149101&gid=590324&sessionid=7df104a05601cab7b679f06929d100cf) of LGBTQ books. Both lists included book cover illustrations, bibliographic information, annotations, and the Dewey Decimal call numbers or library location. There were 63 fiction books and 34 non-fiction books listed. Unfortunately, these were not available via the agency library's website. Similarly, the Karns High School in Knoxville, Knox County, had a Gay Straight Alliance website (URL: http://gsa-gay-straight-alliance.karnshs.knoxschools.org/modules/groups/integrated_home.phtml?gid=3004403&SID&printable=TRUE&SID&portrait_or_landscape=landscape) that listed bullying and harassment information and features a pledge to support students of all sexual orientations, gender identity and expression. Unfortunately, such information was not available via the agency library's website.

8.0 Conclusion

This exploratory research shows that a minimal number of libraries in the state of Tennessee have any LGBTQ information on their websites. Only 19 out of 545 library agencies that have websites in Tennessee (3.49%) represented any form of online LGBTQ information and associated vocabularies. This is quite a dismal situation. The needs of LGBTQ residents are getting unmet in terms of denied access to adequate library services based on the severely limited information represented on the library websites in the state (Mehra, Braquet, and Fielden, forthcoming). The bullying strategies adopted by state legislators threatening to introduce archaic and repressive bills and/or cut funding to the state-supported schools and universities might be the most likely reason for the fear being experienced by libraries across the state leading to their hesitancy in presenting any form of LGBTQ information on their websites. Tennessee's libraries need to wake up to the current reality that LGBTQ people are also members in their communities and they too have information needs that urgently require to be included in the currently available library resources being provided. Keeping their personal beliefs and fear of political repercussions aside, the librarians in the state need to band together and strategize: (1) How to respond to the existing gaps in the provision of LGBTQ information; (2) Implement efforts (e.g., use of emerging innovative technologies) in ways to represent LGBTQ information that do them and the profession proud. They need to remember that in addition to "Diversity," "Equitable Access to Information and Library Services," and "Transforming Libraries," amongst others, one of the eight *Key Action Areas* identified by the ALA is "Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession" that explicitly states: "The association actively works to increase public awareness of

the crucial value of libraries and librarians, to promote state and national legislation beneficial to libraries and library users, and to supply the resources, training and support networks needed by local advocates seeking to increase support for libraries of all types” (n.d.).

In the light of political bullying and lobbying by select state legislative members to deny human rights of LGBTQ populations in Tennessee, current efforts by few library agencies to include LGBTQ information on their websites must be commended. This paper presented a range of details regarding how and what kinds of LGBTQ information various library agencies represented on their websites. These examples provide best practices for other libraries to model and replicate. A couple of concluding notes follow: A most popular strategy used by seven of the 11 ALs with websites involved developing LibGuides with extensive LGBTQ information of all kinds. Other libraries (especially PLs) should adopt similar strategies in the use of such LibGuides that become a great resource for LGBTQ information compiled by librarians working in those agencies. If the particular agencies do not have staff to develop such resources the least they can do is compile web portals that provide online access to LibGuides with LGBTQ information at other library agencies. Also, taking inspiration from their colleagues across the state, in their referral role of providing community information libraries should develop web portals to local, regional, national, and international LGBTQ agencies, organizations, institutions, non-profit groups, and such. Lastly, all library websites should have search engines that retrieve relevant LGBTQ information based on use of appropriate search terms and vocabularies.

Even though much more needs to be done, yet, some of the current library strategies documented in this paper to represent LGBTQ information resources, collections, programs, and services show a resistance by courageous librarians to stand up to the acts of political terrorist behaviors of select state legislative representatives who have succeeded in creating fear via abusing their positions of power to further their own political aspirations at the cost of a denial of human rights and adequate information access to LGBTQ populations that furthers their marginalization. Positive examples of select libraries to include LGBTQ information on their websites provide some hope in library agencies around the state to serve as virtual spaces of resistance and protectors of human rights of LGBTQ people in the future against the dictates of prejudiced and hateful behaviors of regime representatives and the threats of unjust laws.

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