# French and US librarians' Perception Regarding e-Book Reading Data Protection: A Comparative Survey

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## Abstract

*This paper tackles the e-book reading data protection issue from the library's point of view. To identify the librarians' awareness and perception about this topic, the results of a comparative quantitative survey, which has been conducted among the French and American information professionals, will be presented in detail. This study was designed to provide answers to four main assumptions: 1. Librarians are favourable to users' data protection and unanimously opposed to reading data exploitation. 2. Librarians are, for the majority of them, unaware of the e-book reading data collection and exploitation practices. 3. They consider that users do not want third parties collecting and analysing their reading data. 4. Collection managers and digital librarians have a better awareness of the topic and are against the exploitation of e-book reading data. They promote data protection more than their colleagues. After bringing an answer to these hypotheses, this article will summarize the current librarians' position regarding the e-book reading data protection topic. Finally, it will propose solutions to face the corresponding issues.*

*Keywords:* Electronic book, reading data, privacy protection, user privacy, librarians' perception, comparative study

## Introduction

An average reader needs only seven hours to finish the last volume of Suzanne Collins' trilogy "The Hunger Games", on a Kobo e-reader, representing an average of 57 pages per hour. This is the kind of information that can be gathered through the exploitation of e-book reading data. What are the most read e-books? What are the most searched topics in a digital encyclopaedia? After how many pages do readers decide to buy/borrow or abandon the selected item? All these questions can now be answered, based on accurate numbers and figures. Through their e-book offers and e-reading devices lending programs, libraries expose their users to this environment and thus, indirectly, to the e-book reading data exploitation practices. However, isn't it the libraries' role to enable readers to anonymously have access to all types of information, without fear of being judged or watched? Couldn't this role be threatened by e-book reading data collection and exploitation practices? To try to bring an

answer to these questions, this paper tackles the e-book reading data protection issue from the library's point of view.

## Literature Review

Reading data is still an emerging notion. Therefore, no survey directly tackling this topic could be identified. Nevertheless, some US researches (Nichols Hess, 2015; Sutlieff, 2010; Johns, 2005; Sturges, 2003) have been conducted to identify the library users' perception regarding the use of their personal data in libraries. These studies show that patrons trust libraries and are confident that their privacy remains protected in these institutions.

According to Sturges' study (2003), 89% of library users say they have little to no fear regarding the violation of their privacy in their use of libraries. Respondents reject at 92% the idea that libraries can resell their personal data to commercial companies, and 60% reject the fact that libraries can transmit their personal data to the official authorities. Furthermore, 75% of the readers consider that libraries have the capabilities to prevent abuse of electronic resources. This latter point emphasizes the trust that users have in their libraries, since they expect that librarians monitor their practices but would not disclose them under any circumstances.

These conclusions are confirmed by Johns' analysis (2005) on the students' perception regarding their personal data exploitation in a university library. Indeed, students affirm that they perform their information researches without fear. Nevertheless, 92% of them agree that the library should only collect personal data after getting the users' consent. Furthermore, 86% say that these data collections must only be carried out for specific reasons defined in advance, while 91% believe that the library should not transmit any data to third parties. Finally, 74% of the participating students think that the library must define a maximum retention period for personal data. Concerning the exploitation of this information by the university library itself, 23% of students believe that the creation of profiles of interest, in order to better develop the collection and services, is not a sufficient reason to justify the data exploitation. 32% even indicate that no reason justifies the use of students' personal data.

Johns' study (2005) also shows that having good technical knowledge does not necessarily mean knowing the different aspects relating to privacy and personal data protection. Indeed,

94% of the technically competent respondents are not familiar with the privacy policy of their institution, or with the "USA PATRIOT Act". However, after explaining this law, 84% of the participants agree that it may affect their online privacy, while 66% think it may alter their use of library resources. To fill these information gaps, 78% of the students want the library to take the responsibility of informing them about the "Patriot Act". In addition, 76% of them consider that the library is not communicating enough about the undertaken actions related to data protection. Thus, librarians seem to lack proactivity when it comes to making users aware of the data protection issues by failing to tell them the risks and the existing privacy policies and legislation. (Johns, 2005)

**Research questions**

This survey, contrary to the ones presented above which focused on users' opinions, was designed to study the librarians' perception regarding user data protection, especially e-book reading data protection. Therefore it aims at providing answers to the following four assumptions:

1. Librarians are favourable to users' data protection and unanimously opposed to reading data exploitation.
2. Librarians are, for the majority of them, unaware of the e-book reading data collection and exploitation practices.
3. They consider that users do not want third parties collecting and analysing their reading data.
4. Collection managers and digital librarians have a better awareness of the topic and are against the exploitation of e-book reading data. They promote data protection more than their colleagues.

**Methodology**

To identify the awareness and perception among librarians regarding the e-book reading data protection issues, a qualitative survey was conducted for 28 days in May-June 2015 among the French and US professionals. To reach them, emails with the link to the survey were sent to different distribution and discussion lists. These lists were selected on the ALA website because of their relevance to the topic[1]. For the French part of the survey, reaching the participants was more difficult, since no real discussion lists exist. Therefore, different mean of communication were used, like forums, contacts, library associations, etc. The survey

has been developed on the SurveyMonkey platform, chosen for its technical possibilities and its advantageous confidentiality policy. The questionnaire was 38 questions long, but needed only ten minutes to be completed.

**Participants**

The online questionnaire has been completed by 136 US participants and 146 French ones[2]. Among these 282 participants, some did not answer to all the questions. Since no questions were mandatory, the number of respondents may differ from one question to another. Technically programmed conditions have also had the same impact since, according to the given answers certain related questions were automatically skipped by the system.

Among the 136 US respondents, 70% of them hold a Master, 7% a Bachelor and 3% a Doctorate, while 20% did not answer the question. On the French side, 52% of respondents are part of the job category A (manager), 18% of category B (librarian) and 5% belong to the category C (assistant), while 25% did not wish to indicate their employment categories. Among the 173 US and French respondents who indicated their hierarchical position, 51% hold a senior position (director, department head, coordinator, etc.), 39% are librarians, while 10% are library assistants. The results show that the majority of the survey participants' are highly qualified and hold a position with responsibilities.

**Results**

First of all, the results indicate that a large majority of respondents consider libraries as institutions guaranteeing freedom of expression and freedom of access to information. Moreover, 92% US and 79% French professionals consider that the user data protection is part of their missions. 89% US participants also think that users perceive libraries as trusted institutions regarding the protection and non-disclosure of their data, against 71% French respondents. Immediately after the first questions, differences of opinion can be recognized depending on the country of origin, since a greater number of US librarians seem concerned with the data protection of their patrons.

However, this tendency is reversed when it comes to the reading data exploitation practices. Indeed, 74% US librarians and 81% of their French counterparts believe that the reading data collection and use by third parties (be they e-book providers, other commercial entities or

government agencies) can restrict freedom of expression and freedom of access to information. Slightly less (62% in the US and 64% in France) consider that the current treatment of reading data really represents a threat to users' privacy. Again, despite a less notable difference, the French are more numerous to believe so.

Answers to the questions about the Amazon exploitation practices of e-book reading data[3] show that 63% of the 123 US librarians responding to this question claim that these practices are intolerable, against 83% of the 137 French respondents. When it comes to predicting the view of the users for this case study, answering gets more complicated. In total, 37% of all participants skipped this question. Among the answers given by the US professionals, there is little difference between the ones who think that patrons are not favourable of their reading data being exploited (34%) and the ones who consider that this does not disrupt the users (39%). Here, it is interesting to note that the opinions are not unanimous, and that the majority, however small it may be, believes that the Amazon e-book reading data collection does not annoy digital readers. However, on the side of the French librarians, the majority (46%) think that the patrons are against these practices, only 16% believing the opposite.

As for their position concerning this type of reading data exploitation, the librarians are more unanimous. Indeed, 74% US and 60% French participants indicate that taking steps to protect their patrons against this data access is part of their role. 70% and 80% also believe that this type of data processing violates the ethical principles of the profession. Again, the French respondents are more numerous to disagree with the reading data collection, even though they remain fewer than their US counterparts to judge that it is their responsibility to protect their patrons against this type of access.

Moreover, it is interesting to notice that, when it comes to the Adobe processing of e-book reading data[4], the answers are mainly unfavourable to such practices, since 85% of the 120 US respondents to this question and 90% of 132 French ones consider that such practices are intolerable. This trend is reflected in the appreciation of the readers' opinions, since 53% of the US librarians and 66% of their French counterparts think that users are against this form of e-book reading data processing. In this situation, the library professionals are also more (85% in the USA and 87% in France) likely to assert that the ethical principles of the profession have been violated. Yet, fairly close to the values observed in the Amazon case

study, 77% of the US and 66% of the French participants say that it is part of their role to take steps to protect patrons against this reading data access. This suggests that the Adobe case raises more vehemence from the librarians' side, while they are, in both situations, more or less likely to commit for their users' data protection.

Through the comments left by the participants at the end of the questionnaire, two assumptions addressing these differences of opinion between the Amazon and Adobe cases can be made. Firstly, the US librarians seem to see the Adobe case like a technical problem, since it is the transmission method that allows unencrypted data to be transferred to Adobe's server. This security problem is easily remediable and has already been solved since then. In the Amazon case, the concern mainly comes from the company's global confidentiality policy. Thus, information professionals seem to consider that it is indeed embarrassing to collect and store reading data, but that it is significantly more problematic if this data is, due to and IT issue, readable by anybody having good technical skills. Secondly, a majority of respondents from both countries believe that patrons, by accepting the general sale conditions of Amazon, indicating at the same time that they have read the applicable privacy policy, are presumed to be aware that their reading provides data to the company. Some survey participants therefore deem that users knowingly continue to enjoy Amazon's services and offers. However, the Adobe case may be of greater affect for the users' confidence, since they are not aware that their data is not sufficiently secured.

So, despite the fact that users' data protection is, by a large majority, considered as one of the libraries' missions, reading data exploitation is not completely opposed. Indeed, 38% US and 21% French participants judge that *"to embrace many aspects of the modern internet, which has grown more social and personalized, libraries will need to tap into and encourage increased flows of personal information from their patrons."*[5] On average, still 51% do not agree with that statement. Anyhow, respondents are not unanimous, and the majority is almost imperceptible. Yet the French are less divided, since 60% disagree with this statement, against 40% of the US professionals.

In addition, an average of 38% of the respondents deem that patrons are also responsible for protecting their data and that if they do not wish to see their information used, they should not use e-readers requiring identification. However, 48% of the US professionals disagree with

this principle. Consequently, it can be assumed that the majority of the US participants are aware that patrons may not have the choice regarding their e-reading equipment or the downloading platforms, that they may not always be aware of the reading data collection and exploitation, and that they therefore cannot be fully responsible for the disclosure of such information. On the contrary, in France, only 25% of the professionals seem to think so.

When reading data exploitation proves useful to libraries (statistics, needs' identification, collection and services' improvement, etc.), then it is accepted by 70% of the 231 respondents to this question, whether from France or from the USA. Some conditions are nevertheless considered essential before any data exploitation, like anonymising, selecting a limited number of data to use or, in France, filling in the data exploitation statement of the Commission nationale de l'informatique et des libertés (CNIL). Collecting the users' authorization prior to analysing the data and/or developing a confidentiality policy to be signed by the patrons are also actions that the survey participants recommended. Overall, it is only a quarter (23%) of the US and 10% of the French respondents to this question that only mention one condition to be met before any exploitation of users' reading data. This allows asserting that most professionals would combine various criteria and thus contribute to a more sophisticated data protection. Among the 20 participants who left a comment, some also proposed other data protection methods: temporize data retention and implement an erasing calendar; exclusively use the collected data for a predetermined purpose, justified and publicly known; supervise as much as possible the exploitation process; analyse data in large quantities and keep only the statistical report; do not give away this data for commercial purpose, or request the full disclosure of the data exploitation process to the e-book suppliers; do not use Adobe Digital Editions, v.4; require vendors to treat this data as confidential; or offer opt-in solutions to the patrons. Other comments from the US participants also emphasize the dilemma in which the librarians are, on the one side, needing to collect data for their statistics and, on the other side wishing not to transmit this information to the vendors nor work with identifiable data[6]. Another dilemma arises too, between wanting to protect the users' privacy and still providing the appreciated recommendations service[7].

Following these paradoxes, an average of 29% of the 231 respondents to this question would not cease their e-book lending program, even if they would find out that the privacy policy of their e-book suppliers allows the reading data exploitation. These results, however, strongly

diverge between the US and French respondents, what once again emphasizes the highest proportion of French librarians to disagree with the reading data exploitation practices. This finding is here surprising, since the level of commitment from the French librarians regarding reading data protection seemed, in the previous answers, lower than the one of their US-counterparts. However, the comments left suggest that, since the e-book market and the integration of these resources in libraries are still in expansion in France, many professionals would like to negotiate the terms of the future licensing agreements, or find alternative solutions in favour of the reading data protection.

Moreover, 32% of the US and 40% of the French participants state that the privacy policy of e-book vendors is part of their selection criteria when choosing their business partners, against respectively 31% and 26% saying the contrary. The remaining 37% and 36% did not answer the question, probably because they are not involved in the decision process related to collection development and digital resources. Indeed, among the given explanations, some say that such a decision does not depend on them (10 US individuals and 2 French). Because of the e-book popularity and the lack of alternative platforms, others (18 in the US and 2 in France) feel compelled to continue their e-book lending offers, whatever the conditions relating to users' privacy. However, some participants imagine negotiating with the e-book providers to modify the reading data confidentiality conditions in the contracts (8 individuals in the United States and 7 in France) or offer, wherever possible, alternative solutions (7 US and 9 French respondents). A US participant also mentions that before taking any decision, it would be necessary to compare the benefits and risks of such a lending program, to make an objective choice, adapted to the concerned institution. Among the French librarians, some (10 respondents) deem that informing users is essential and justifies the lending program continuation, while 9 participants felt that stopping the e-book offer would be a disproportionate outcome in comparison with the current general lack of privacy on the Internet. Others (5 people) say that they only agree with the data exploitation if it is done for the needs of the libraries and four individuals assert that the data processing must comply with the CNIL requirements. In the end, only 8 French and 9 US professionals maintain that such e-book reading data exploitation practices are in no way tolerable and could lead them to stop their e-book lending offer[8].

Concerning their own institution, 55% of the 113 US and 35% of the 116 French respondents to the question assert that they have a privacy policy. Of the 74 participants, from both countries, that reported not having a privacy policy at their institution, only 4 US and 2 French librarians plan to write one soon. The wide negative response from the French side can be explained by the fact that among the 30 concerned individuals (of 44 French respondents to the question), some are perhaps not in a hierarchical position allowing them to take the initiative to develop a privacy policy, while others likely consider that the development of a privacy policy is not an adequate measure for their institution. On the side of the professionals having a privacy policy in their library, 19% of the US ones (12 people) and 24% of the French ones (10 individuals) included the e-book reading data protection in it. Still, in the US, 59% do not encompass this problem in their document, against 45% in France. Against all odds and despite the low level of awareness of the e-book reading data issue, some librarians have identified the problem and tried to provide an answer, both in France or the United States.

As for their work environment, 41% of the US respondents and 8% of the French ones know of other libraries that have a privacy policy. This important difference between the countries of origin can be explained by the fact that the French, being less likely to have a privacy policy in their institution, are logically fewer to know if other institutions have one. Of the 69 total respondents who reported knowing other institutions having a privacy policy, 14% of the US respondents (8 persons) confirm that it also includes the e-book reading data issue. However the large majority of them do not know if this is the case (70%). On the French side, 62% of the 13 French respondents (8 individuals) claim knowing that other institutions' privacy policies also include e-book reading data. Consequently, it can be shown that the protection of e-book reading data seems to be a relevant topic in a few institutions.

Regarding the legal environment, few US participants seem to have heard about the 1974 Privacy Act, since they are 41% to say that they do not know this law. Among the 35% knowing it, 53% consider that it is effective, 17% believing the opposite. Most of them deem that this legislation is no longer adapted to the current situation and should be updated. One participant mentioned that the permitted exceptions are too broad and that the law does not sufficiently regulate the data processing by government agencies[9]. This idea is joined by another respondent indicating that the PATRIOT Act discredits the Privacy Act, while a third

person does not think that laws are adequate safeguards to anything[10]. In France, the Informatique et Libertés law is well known by librarians, since only 5% of the French respondents reported not knowing it. Among the 74% of French professionals being aware that this legal instrument exists, 37% judge that it is effective, though 27% think the opposite. Among the latter, there are many (13 people) who feel that it is inappropriate to current digital practices and/or that its provisions are unclear or insufficient. In addition, three persons indicate that this law cannot apply to foreign e-book suppliers, while two respondents regret that virtually no control is possible. As with the USA PATRIOT Act, one of the French professionals mentions the fact that the 2006 law Information discredits the Informatique et Libertés law. When it comes to geographically or thematically more specific legal framework, fewer people are aware of the laws, since only 18% of the US and 7% of the French librarians know the Reader Privacy Act adopted in some US-states. Among the 25 US and the 10 French participants being familiar with the Reader Privacy Act, only 3 individuals (17 people checked "no answer") assert that this measure is not effective to protect the reading data. Indeed, one of them states that there are workarounds and another thinks that "it is, in the end, the users' responsibility and right to protect themselves. We can only educate them of the dangers; they must make this decision for themselves."

Regarding the actions undertaken by the library associations, the US respondents indicate almost equally with 38% being aware of and 40% ignoring the American Library Association (ALA) Privacy Toolkit dedicated to data protection and privacy, made available to librarians by the ALA to support them in their initiatives. In France, 71% are unfamiliar with this tool. Among the 60 professionals who are aware of the existence of this toolkit, only 15% of the US respondents use it in their organisation, none doing so in France, the tool being here not adapted to the national context. However, among those who do not use it in their library, 76% of them from both countries think it can be useful. So surprisingly, the majority of those who know the ALA Privacy Toolkit but do not use it still believe that it can be interesting. This paradox is probably due to the fact that the librarians answering so are not in a hierarchical position enabling them to propose the use of the ALA Privacy Toolkit in their institution and/or their personal opinion diverges from their global library policy in this regard. In light of the responses of the French librarians, it is clear that the national context does not allow the use of ALA documents, even if such a tool seems to be considered relevant. Indeed, they are 85% of the 112 French respondents judging that the development of such a toolkit by the

Association des bibliothécaires de France (ABF) would be beneficial to promote a national harmonization. 80% also indicate that the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA) could propose a similar practical guide to encourage a European conformity. Finally, they are 77% who think that such a privacy toolkit developed by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) could contribute to an international agreement. These results are also reflected by the US professionals, since 78% of the 108 US respondents also claim that the creation of such a tool by IFLA would be advantageous.

The comments left at the end of the questionnaire allow identifying several other themes, repeatedly mentioned by respondents. Among them, the opt-in and opt-out options (cited by 7 US participants) as well as the leading role of libraries as users' educators regarding the risks of privacy violation are two meaningful points for the US professionals. Many (33 respondents, including two French) also stress the importance of informing readers about the collected data[11] and the use that will be made of this data, still without dictating the patrons' behaviour or restricting their choice in regard to e-book lending offers, which would then, according to one participant, be contrary to the mission and ethical principles of libraries.

Some respondents (23 individuals, including one French) still think that most Internet users are now ready to sacrifice their privacy to gain access to certain services, sometimes by comfort, sometimes by obligation, to be able to use a service (free e-book lending, e-shopping, music sharing, etc.). Some French librarians also mention that the e-book reading data exploitation is a quite acceptable practice if the data has been previously made anonymous. Indeed, they deem that data collection for statistical purposes is essential and must be differentiated from the technology surveillance practices. A respondent also suggests that the concept of "sensitive personal data" should be more specific, since all the data is not equivalent in terms of incurred risks. The same individual also indicates that Information and Library System (ILS) providers are already aware of the librarians' ethical principles and develop solutions to protect users' data by implementing technical boundaries preventing the disclosure of too much information regarding a given patron. However, this assertion is contradicted by the comment of another participant, which nevertheless emphasizes that libraries only collect and store such information for the welfare of their readers, unlike the GAFA (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple) which "use the data to put us on file". In contrast

to this threatening vision, another French librarian believes that "patron's access to a digital resource through a subscription system belonging to a platform or an aggregator, whether accessing it from outside or from the library, becomes an issue, firstly, if the requested personal data needed to subscribe goes beyond essential personal data, and secondly, if the data is stored for an undefined time and unverifiable exploitation project".

Other comments from US respondents raise awareness of the issues of e-book acquisition through consortium[12] and of the competing interests between offering a maximum of information resources with a small budget and respecting the missions and ethics of the profession. Actually respect for the confidentiality of user data depends largely on the relationship between libraries and e-book providers[13], as well as on international data transfer and the corresponding legal framework. Finally, some mention that their library does not care about users' privacy and data protection issues and that it is not always the collection development section who is in charge of creating and implementing a privacy policy. The latter document could also be contrary to the interests of certain patrons who wish to be able to get a list of everything they have borrowed. In a more fatalistic way, one respondent even asserted that "e-books are for making money for the seller and the customer has little choice".

**Discussion**

As presupposed, a large majority of librarians (92% US and 79% French) consider that the users' data protection is part of their mission. However, contrary to the assumption that they would unanimously be opposed to the reading data exploitation practices, some of the respondents consider that the fate of their data and privacy belongs to the readers' responsibility. This can mainly be observed on the French side. In addition, Amazon practices or Adobe security flaws are tolerated by some participants and are sometimes seen as the price to pay to access the service. However, the latter trend is, this time, less obvious on the French side. These professionals seem to disagree more than their colleagues in the US to these accesses and exploitation of users' data. Faced with this issue, only few respondents having no privacy policy at their institution consider the creation of such a document. The majority of the US-participants offering e-books in their libraries cannot imagine ending their e-book lending program because of an inadequate supplier's privacy policy. The opposite seems to be true in France, where the majority would be ready to end their program depending on the terms offered by the provider. The question on this topic being formulated

hypothetically, the respondents' statements do not ensure the actual implementation of those resolutions. Still, French librarians seem to engage more vigorously for the users' data protection. Although it is complex to interpret this divergence of opinion, it can be supposed that the national context plays an important role here. French librarians feel perhaps powerless in front of international web platforms, but are more inclined to commit to reading data protection when selecting their local e-book suppliers.

Indeed, 40% of the French participants agreed with the fact that the suppliers' privacy policy belongs to the selection criteria when choosing business partners, against 32% US. Moreover, the latter are more numerous to assert that, due to the e-book's popularity and the monopoly of the existing platforms, no real alternatives exist. French participants added, that ending an e-book lending program because of the weaknesses of a suppliers' privacy policy would be a disproportionate solution considering the general lack of respect for privacy on the Internet, apparently accepted by a majority of the population. Therefore, and despite the fact that many respondents in both countries consider data protection as an important topic, current concrete commitment mainly aims at informing and training users to reach a free and conscious consent from the users. This would give them the freedom to choose by themselves between using, or not, an e-book lending service that can lead to privacy violations. (Re)negotiating contracts with e-book suppliers and searching for alternatives or equivalent services proposed with better terms are also considered solutions, mainly in France.

Thus, contrary to the second research question assuming that librarians are unaware of the reading data exploitation practices of the digital book providers and of the corresponding legal framework, certain professionals, both from USA or France, seem to know that the e-book reading data is used by the suppliers. They also responded to it, such as through the adoption of a privacy policy covering this aspect. However, comments submitted by respondents from both countries suggest that the majority of the participants have discovered this issue through the survey. Still, half of the US professionals are aware of the legal framework tackling this issue (Privacy Act, Reader Privacy Act and ALA Privacy Toolkit). Among them, some deem that the 1974 Privacy Act is an efficient measure of protection, demonstrating a lack of knowledge of the latest legislative developments in the matter. In France, the legal framework (Data Protection law) is more widely known, even though many professionals find it unsuited to the digital world and to international transfers of personal data. In contrast, the US

initiatives (Reader Privacy Act and ALA Privacy Toolkit ALA) remain largely ignored by the French librarians, what seems natural given the different national contexts bringing different requirements.

Concerning the second assumption, on the presumed users' perception, many survey respondents did not give their opinion. Nevertheless, thanks to the few collected answers and the comments left at the end of the questionnaire, it could be discerned that a majority of US librarians believe that the users do not see privacy protection issues in the same way and, therefore, do not consider it problematic to disclose some of their personal information in exchange for an access to an offer or for the services' customization. This aspect is also mentioned by some French participants, although more moderately. Indeed, the latter mainly suggest that the general lack of privacy on the Internet has become usual and commonly accepted, letting e-book reading data collection and exploitation practices seem banal for the users.

Thereby, the third hypothesis, believing that library professionals think that users do not wish to see their reading of data used by third parties, is being partially reversed. Indeed, despite the fact that 89% of the US and 71% of the French librarians assume that users perceive libraries as trusted institutions regarding the protection and non-publication of their information, a number of professionals, mainly in the USA consider however that their readers are not particularly against the use of their personal data.

The analysis of the US professionals' responses, working in the collection development section and/or being part of the digital content management team did not emphasize significant differences of perception compared to the global average, except that, surprisingly, they are more numerous (45% against 35% across all specializations) to agree with delegating the responsibility of their data disclosure to the users. The fourth hypothesis proves therefore to be reversed in the case of the US librarians. However, the trend is somewhat different in France. There, none of the specialized professionals (digital content or collection development) tolerates Amazon or Adobe practices, against 83% of the overall intolerance average for Amazon and 90% for Adobe. These librarians are also more likely than the other professionals from all specializations, to consider that undertaking an action against this type of reading data exploitation is part of their role (81% in the Amazon case, against 64% on

average and 75% in the Adobe case against 65% on average). Yet when it comes to stopping e-book lending programs, they are less than the average to indicate their opinion (50% non-response), and therefore less likely to imagine such a solution (31% against 48% on average). However, these professionals are mostly against the reading data exploitation by libraries, even for statistics. So, in France, the hypothesis stating that librarians working in the field of collection development and/or those managing digital content are against the e-book reading data exploitation practices, proves correct. Nevertheless, their propensity to undertake some actions is not necessarily higher; trends show that they do not seem to be more committed than other professionals do to protect such personal data.

**Conclusion**

Even though the answers brought by the results of this survey were sometimes surprising compared to the assumptions made, the library's role in user data protection and e-book reading data protection still can be considered as important. Consequently, various actions could be undertaken by the library and information professionals to protect their users' e-book reading data or, at least, to better supervise their exploitation.

The four most important points going into that direction, which are also those prevailing in the comments of the survey, are:

• Develop a data protection policy, a privacy policy and/or a clear code of conduct, accompanied by easily comprehensible information to library users.

• Give readers the right to opt out of the reading data collection, or even ask them explicitly in advance if they wish to opt-in.

• Lobby to promote the development of laws that would be more suitable to the digital environment and would lead to better regulation of the liability of providers' liability in case of reading data collection and exploitation.

• Make users aware of reading data privacy issues. Make them aware that the contractual practices of third parties do not necessarily meet the libraries' ethical principles.
(Mayer-Schönberger, 2014; Caldwell-Stone, 2012 ; McSherry, 2010 ; Ozer, 2010; Coombs, 2005 ; Fifarek, 2002)

In short, *"librarians of all ranks must become more familiar with the technology they employ in order to educate their patrons on how to protect themselves during online*

*information seeking, whether or not they are using library resources. Only then can we be sure that we have fully prepared our patrons for the vicissitudes of the online world."*
(Fifarek, 2002, p. 372)

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Sutlieff, L. & Chelin, J., (2010), « An absolute prerequisite: the importance of user privacy and trust in maintaining academic freedom at the library », *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, vol. 42, n° 3, p. 163-177

[1] Censorship and intellectual property : ifrt-members@lists.ala.org (417), patronprivacy@lists.ala.org (160), yalsaintellectualfreedom-ig@lists.ala.org (186), iflapubdem@lists.ala.org (140), ifforum@lists.ala.org (295)
Regulation regarding libraries : alscleg@lists.ala.org (51)
Technologies : stars-l@lists.ala.org (629)
Public libraries collection development group : pla-cllnmgmt@lists.ala.org (545)
Collection development groups:
 alctscentral@lists.ala.org (707),
alcts-publibtechserv@lists.ala.org (126),
alcts-eres@lists.ala.org (684),
lita-erm@lists.ala.org (660),
lita-l@lists.ala.org (3190)

[2] To reach representatives results, the goal was to achieve a minimum response rate of 10%. Since few individuals took the time to complete the survey, despite reminders, less than 2% of the US recipients completed the survey (136 participants / 7790 contacted). On the French side, the response rate is better, since 15% of the recipients completed the survey (146 participants / 1000 contacted)

[3] In 2012, an agreement between the US e-book provider OverDrive and Amazon allowed Kindle owners to borrow e-books in their library. These readers, however, were surprised to receive advertising messages offering them, on expiry of the loan period, to buy the borrowed book. In these messages, Amazon ensured the integration of all the previous taken annotations in the purchased copy. This confirmed the fact that Amazon collects and stores the users' reading data and uses them to send targeted advertisements. This is due to the fact that the users, to be able to borrow Kindle e-books in their local library, have to identify themselves on the Amazon website before the lending transaction takes place. According to Amazon, this information is subject to their commercial privacy policy standards.

[4] In October 2014, the new version 4.0 of Adobe Digital Editions was widely criticized. Indeed, this software, often used for e-book reading on all media equipment, transmitted all reading data to the company's servers, where the information was stored in "clear text", unencrypted and therefore readable by everybody.

[5] Parry, 2012, p. 14

[6] *« Anonymously collected batch data for use by the library is an important measure of our effectiveness at achieving library missions. Some level of data is necessary. I am less sanguine about sharing it with vendors and am uncomfortable with anything that identifies particular users. »*

[7] *« Circulation stats are data collection, and I suspect that "recommendations" based on past choices, and maintaining a list of past choices on an opt-in basis, would be welcomed by many patrons as a convenience.»*

[8] Like the following comment:
*« Just because lack of data privacy \*seems\* inevitable that doesn't mean we should stop advocating for data anonymity and total privacy. »*

[9] *« There are many broad exemptions. My trust that government agencies are handling my data ethically is very poor. »*

[10] *« Because I don't think laws are the appropriate measure for anything. »*

[11] Like the following comment:
*« Many patrons would rather give up some privacy in order to have access to ebooks. As a library we need to make sure patrons know what the policies are, not having it hidden in the fine print that no one reads. »*

[12] *« Consider that many public libraries do not enter into direct contracts with ebook vendors, but instead are part of consortia which coordinate ebook lending. This situation presents a new dynamic with regard to making choices based on privacy practices. Public libraries which cannot afford to make independent contracts will have to accept the option offered by their consortium if they want to offer ebooks to their patrons. »*

[13] *« Given little to no legal ground, privacy is largely dependent on the relationship between libraries and vendors. The idea of patron privacy is often misunderstood by vendors. In practice, a misconception of the idea of privacy by a vendor has prevented libraries from getting basic user info (e.g. how many unique users). »*

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