

# A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Toolkit for Resource Description

Treshani Perera (she/her)

December 1, 2023

# Code of Conduct

The following code of conduct is implemented during this keynote.

*(Adapted from Digital Library Federation (DLF) Code of Conduct “How to be” section)*

- listen as much as you speak, and remember that the presenter and attendees from marginalized groups may have expertise you are unaware of;
- encourage and yield the floor to those whose viewpoints may be under-represented in a group;
- accept critique graciously and offer it constructively;
- stay alert, as Active Bystanders, to the welfare of those around you.

# Roadmap

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- challenges impacting DEI work in libraries
- advocacy for DEI in resource description
- biases in cataloging systems and standards
- a diverse workforce in technical services and fostering a workforce adept in cultural concepts, and
- Strategies and resources supporting DEI in resource description and technical services

My positionality  
as your keynote speaker

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# Challenges impacting DEI work

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**WHITEWASHING HISTORY IS NOT THE ANSWER: HB 322 AND HB 327  
WILL ERASE PROGRESS AND SILENCE PEOPLE, KEEPING OHIOANS  
UNAWARE, IGNORANT, AND AFRAID**



By [Gary Daniels](#), chief lobbyist  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2021 - 7:15AM

## OHIO CAPITAL JOURNAL

COMMENTARY POLITICS & GOV HEALTH CARE EDUCATION CIVIL RIGHTS PUBLIC CORRUPTION

EDUCATION

POLITICS & GOV

### Book bans accelerate in Ohio as new bill aims to prohibit 'controversial' topics

BY: [MORGAN TRAU](#) - MARCH 8, 2022 3:50 AM

< PRESS RELEASES



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN

## Ohio House Passes Multiple Anti-LGBTQ+ Bills; Human Rights Campaign Condemns Passage & Urges Against Senate Passage

by [HRC Staff](#) • June 22, 2023



A controversial Republican bill that targets higher education has been added to a state budget proposal

By: *Conner Woodruff*

Posted on: *Thursday, June 22, 2023*

OH SB83



NEWS

**Government** State Policy

May 18, 2023

## Ohio State Board Pushes Back on Anti-DEI Bill

Ohio State's Board of Trustees blasted a State Senate bill one day before it passed. The rare move comes as culture war politics drive education reforms across the U.S.

By [Josh Moody](#)



HIGHERED DIVE

[Deep Dive](#) [Opinion](#) [Library](#) [Events](#) [Press Releases](#)

[Ed Tech](#) [Policy & Legal](#) [Leadership](#) [Students](#) [Enrollment](#) [For-Profit](#) [Faculty and Staff](#)

DEEP DIVE

## Ohio Republicans to push revised bill limiting college DEI and faculty strikes

The author of the far-reaching proposal is optimistic it will pass the House, despite strong pushback from faculty groups and unions.

Published Sept. 13, 2023



[Laura Spitalniak](#)  
Staff Reporter

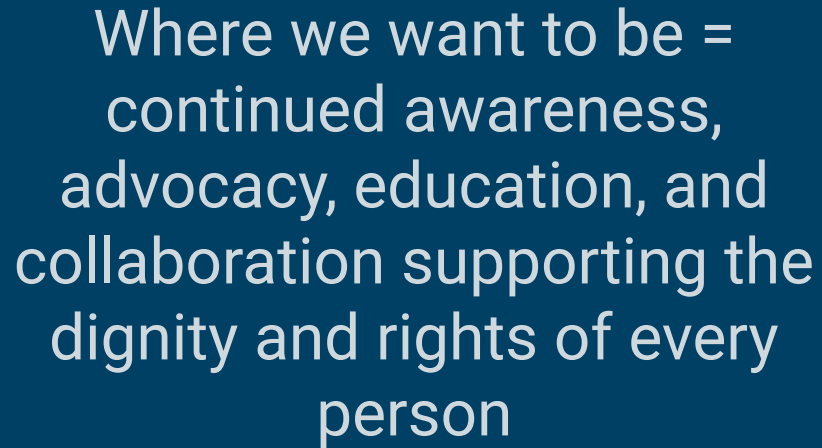
We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

- ALA Code of Ethics (rev. June 29, 2021)





How do we  
get to...



Where we want to be =  
continued awareness,  
advocacy, education, and  
collaboration supporting the  
dignity and rights of every  
person

# Identifying Biases in Systems

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Who has been doing description work historically, and who's continuing to do that work?

Where is that intellectual labor coming from, and where is the work being done?

Who has the resources to contribute to the systems we use for description?

Whose expertise is being consulted and for which communities?

Under whose leadership is description work being done?

# Ethical concerns behind AI in cataloging

[Link](#) to full text

- Sensitive information in datasets
- Biases in existing datasets

“Cataloging systems may struggle to adequately represent diverse perspectives, cultures, and voices, leading to under-representation or misrepresentation of certain groups. This lack of inclusivity can perpetuate societal biases”

- Lack of accountability and transparency

## ChatGPT

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in cataloging raises several ethical concerns, which can be broadly categorized into issues related to privacy, bias, accountability, transparency, and the potential impact on employment. Here are some key ethical concerns:

### 1. Privacy Concerns:

- **Data Collection and Storage:** AI systems often rely on large datasets for training, which may include sensitive information. The collection and storage of such data raise privacy concerns, especially if the data used for cataloging contains personal or confidential information.
- **User Tracking:** Cataloging systems that use AI might track users' preferences and behaviors to improve recommendations. This raises concerns about user privacy and the potential for the misuse of personal data.

### 2. Bias and Fairness:

- **Algorithmic Bias:** AI models trained on biased data can perpetuate and even amplify existing biases. If the cataloging system is biased, it can lead to unfair or discriminatory outcomes, such as promoting certain items or categories over others based on biased criteria.
- **Inclusive Representation:** Cataloging systems may struggle to adequately represent diverse perspectives, cultures, and voices, leading to underrepresentation or misrepresentation of certain groups. This lack of inclusivity can perpetuate societal biases.

### 3. Accountability and Transparency:

- **Lack of Accountability:** AI systems can sometimes operate as "black boxes," making it challenging to understand how decisions are made. Lack of transparency can hinder accountability and make it difficult to address issues such as errors or biases in the cataloging process.
- **Responsibility for Errors:** When AI systems make mistakes in cataloging, it raises questions about who is responsible. Lack of clear accountability mechanisms can make it challenging to address and rectify errors.

### 4. Impact on Employment:

- **Job Displacement:** The implementation of AI in cataloging and other tasks may lead to job displacement for human workers. This raises ethical concerns about the social and economic impact on individuals and communities, including potential job loss and the need for retraining and upskilling.

### 5. Security Risks:

- **Vulnerability to Attacks:** AI systems can be vulnerable to adversarial attacks, where malicious actors manipulate the system by introducing subtle changes to the input data. This raises concerns about the security and integrity of cataloging systems.

### 6. Unintended Consequences:

- **Unintended Effects:** The deployment of AI in cataloging may have unintended consequences, such as shaping user behavior, influencing cultural trends, or impacting the availability and visibility of certain products or content. Ethical concerns arise when these consequences have negative effects on society.

Addressing these ethical concerns requires careful consideration, transparency in AI development, ongoing monitoring, and the implementation of ethical guidelines and standards for the use of AI in cataloging and related applications. Additionally, involving diverse stakeholders in the development and decision-making processes can help mitigate some of these ethical challenges.

It is by bringing in more diverse perspectives and experiences that we can truly begin to address and rectify biases in systems used in library technical services. A more diverse workforce would also help to recognize labor, especially emotional labor, that fuels DEI work in libraries.

# Free labor/Unseen labor behind DEI work

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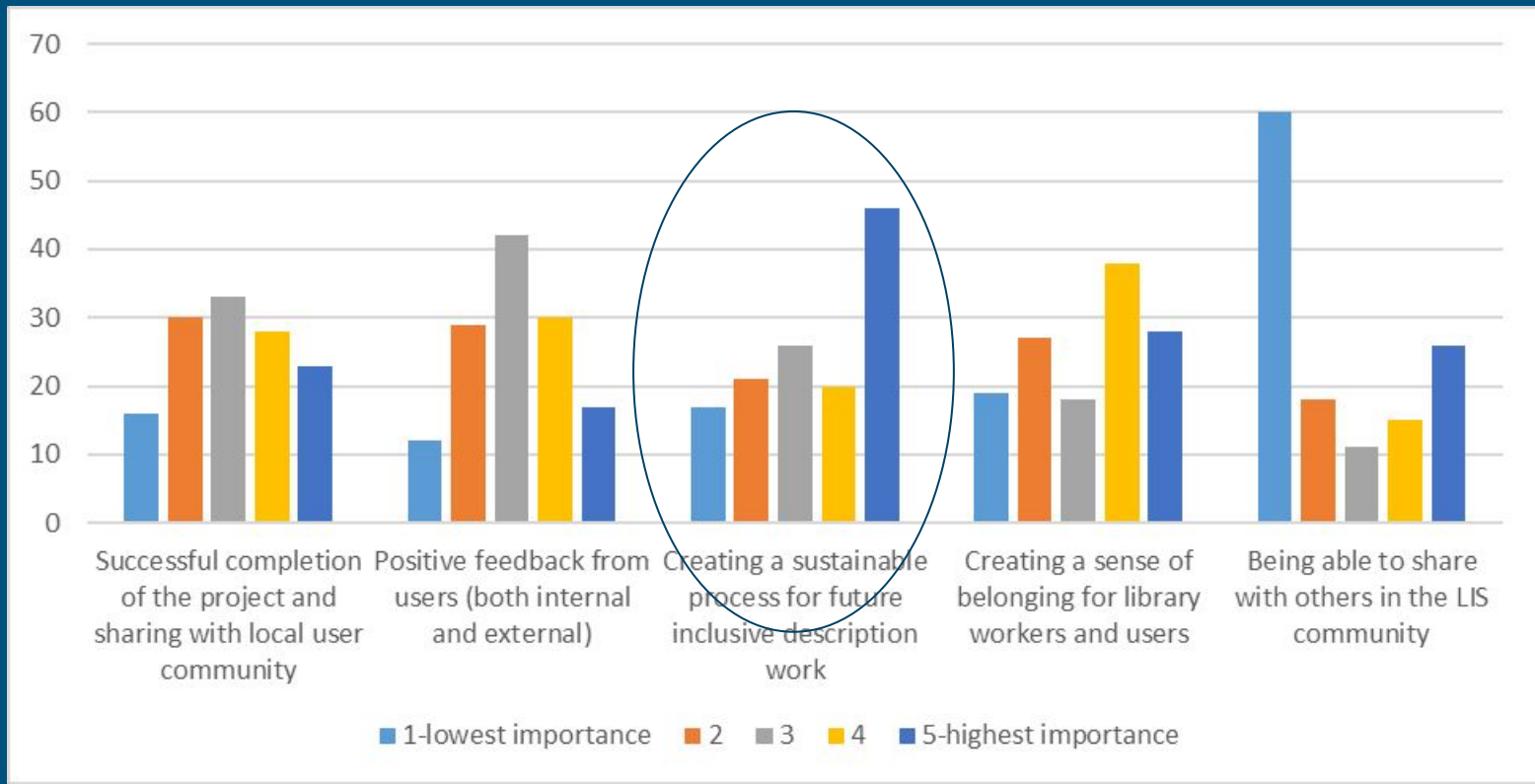
Invisible Labor and Inclusive Metadata: bringing equity, diversity, and inclusion work out of the shadows (2022)

“The first step to making EDI be part of visible labor is to prioritize related competencies, skills, and experiences as essential.”

Sound knowledge of cultural concepts is critical for sustainable DEI work.

Lived experience IS experience!

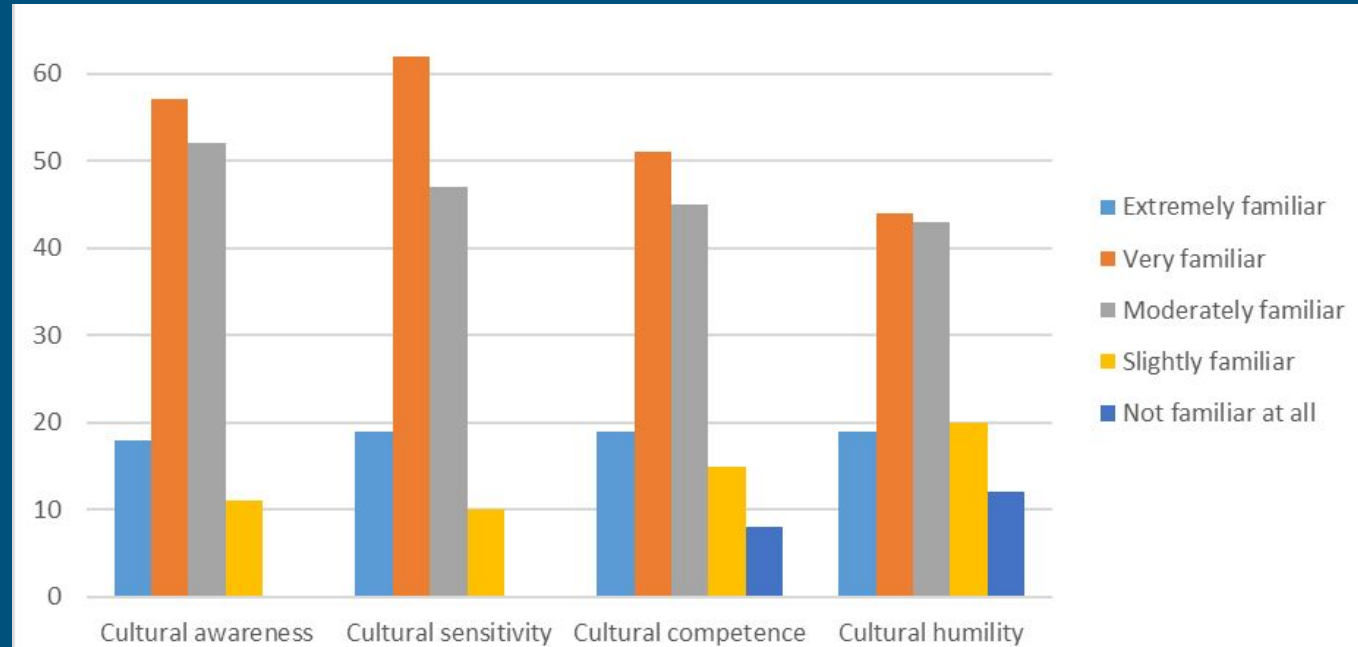
Q20: Please rank the following **outcomes** in order of **importance** when proposing an inclusive description project or initiative at your workplace.



# A workforce adept in cultural concepts

Treshani Perera. (2022). Description Specialists and Inclusive Description Work and/or Initiatives - An Exploratory Study. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 60:5, 355-386. DOI: 10.1080/01639374.2022.2093301.

Q18: How familiar are you with the following topics in the context of inclusive description?



# DEI in Library Technical Services

Consider community-specific guidelines and recommendations

Context of terminology: historical context

- In transcribed data vs. “cataloged-supplied” data

Focus on the power of collective efforts: change is possible and feasible

- May de-emphasize individualism and celebrating individual accomplishments, but this work cannot be done sustainably in an individualistic model



# Resources:

Subject Headings:

Library of Congress Resources:

[SACO Resources](#) (links to new heading proposal, heading change proposal)

[About the SACO Program](#)

[List](#) of SACO Programs

[Cataloging Lab](#) (founded by Violet Fox)

[Critical Cataloging Resources](#) (compiled by Treshani Perera)

[Equitable Knowledge Organization](#) (compiled by B. M. Watson)

## On Critical Cataloging: Q&A with Treshani Perera (*Library Journal*, 2022)

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“We don’t always have to reinvent the wheel. Somebody has already done the work that somebody else can run with, and there is an openness in the professional community to share the work. Chances are if you’ve thought about an issue, and if it’s already on somebody else’s radar, there’s probably a blog post on it, probably someone’s given a presentation on it... It’s a good time to be involved with changes to cataloging practices and language in cataloging standards.”



Thank you for your time.



Treshani Perera  
treshani.perera@uky.edu

