

Summary



»Putting Up with Freedom!« / On the Impositions Caused by Free Speech and Freedom of Information (Hermann Rösch)

(pp. 344 – 347)

It can take a lot of effort to extend respectfulness, tolerance and patience towards those views which do not coincide with our own opinions or are contradictory to the dominant majority view. But are free speech and the freedom of information really boundless? And if limits are needed: who should set them, how should they be determined? This article by Hermann Rösch is not about statutory regulations, but rather about the basic ethical values from which claims for liberty -- in this case the right to free expression and the free flow of information -- can be derived. There is no doubt that statutes and laws are legally binding; but this does not mean that the norms they express are necessarily acceptable from an ethical point of view. Even in democratically organised societies legal regulations can be found again and again which lead to biases -- due to pressure from lobbyists or on account of existing social asymmetries -- that are questionable from an ethical perspective.

Due to social and political developments, as well as technical innovations, the general framework is constantly being changed and this makes it necessary to review again and again whether legal regulations need to be adjusted in order to take into account basic ethical values. If current law impedes or even prevents ethically responsible action, this results in a dilemma which, in democratic societies, can only be resolved when the law is observed, but the designated steps are followed to achieve through public pressure a change in the legal situation by using ethical concerns as an instrument for critical analysis.

New Competencies Through Cooperation / Reading Promotion and Media Education with Tablets in Rhineland-Palatinate (Christian Kleinhanß, Norbert Sprung)

(pp. 364 – 367)

Promoting reading and language skills has long been a core competency within public libraries. In this modern age where electronic media are a natural part of the lives of children and adolescents, this activity can no longer be conducted exclusively through the classical media, such as the printed book. This insight has created a need in many libraries to expand their media competencies and integrate them with existing knowledge and experience. The State Library Service Agency of Rhineland-Palatinate (LBZ) is an important partner and has been providing important support services for many years. This includes organising state-wide events and centrally created materials for use in a graded programme for promoting reading and language skills.

During the planning phase in the development of a programme for digital media competence it was soon decided that the help of an external partner was necessary. In the spring of 2018 the LBZ entered a partnership with an organisation named „media+bildung.com,“ a subsidiary branch of the Rhineland-Palatinate State Agency for Media and Communication, which has specialised in issues of media literacy and educational consultancy within Rhineland-Palatinate. As a starting point for the joint project it was necessary to invest in tablets and a selection of suitable apps. Subsequently media experts and library staff members developed feasible ideas and modules which were then put into practice with the goal of documenting their experiences and developing a methods handbook.

»I am not a refugee, I am Marwa« / The City Library of Cologne Collects Stories of Refugees and Displaced Persons (Sebastian Abresch, Sarah Dudek)

(pp. 368 – 371)

There are good reasons for listening to others. Every person has a story to tell -- and every story is worth being heard. Following this maxim the City Library of Cologne joined together with libraries in Roskilde (Denmark), Malmö (Sweden) and Athens (Greece) to record the stories of individuals who have only recently become part of our society: people who have had to flee their homes. The EU project is titled »A Million Stories« and offers displaced persons a forum in which to document and publish their personal experiences.

Since 2017 the project has created a multimedia collection of over 600 stories drawn from real life: about childhood, ancestry, education, hopes and desires -- but also about distress, sorrow, flight and uncertainty. »A Million Stories« is intended to preserve these tales of migration and make them available to a wider audience. To this end the project partners have created the online platform *refugeelives.eu*.

Such a collection is a precious good. In the mass media the topic of flight and migration is too often presented in the abstract, in terms of numbers, statistics, political decisions. Less visible are the fates of those individuals who are directly affected by political decisions. This collection directs our attention to the refugees' countries of origin, sheds light on the conditions in which they have been living since arriving in Germany and encourages more interaction between refugees and the residents of Germany.