

lifelike characters, dramatic event, and realistic details. Although an author's inspiration for writing could possibly have come from something witnessed, experience, or heard about from another source, there is never any intended resemblance to specific individuals or specific institutions. The instructional purpose is to raise consciousness about AECT's professional ethics.

What is needed

Our colleagues and students can be alert and informed about what to anticipate. A reading of a scenario that applies a relevant principle will prepare AECT members for how to think and how to proceed when there are suspicions of unethical occurrences. Rather than practice at judging and blaming, the most beneficial activity

is practice at seeking understanding and resolution.

References

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- Yeaman, A. R. J. (2004). Professionalism, ethics and social practice. *TechTrends*, 48(4), 7-11.

Scenario: Protecting Learners From Technology

by Andrew R. J. Yeaman

The new district media supervisor was visiting Central Middle School's LMC for the first time. Meesha, the school librarian, felt confused.

"Certainly these computers are safe," she said, blinking. "Internet filters prevent unauthorized access and the acceptable use policy and the student conduct code prohibit it."

"There are physical hazards here," insisted Kris. "You haven't noticed?"

"Central has plenty of academically inclined students," objected Meesha. "But none are on a school computer long enough to develop carpal tunnel syndrome."

Kris walked over to the computers which had replaced the card catalog. The computers sat on old lab benches. Taller children stood to look things up. The shortest perched on tippy stools, their feet dangling or tucked under them.

Their seated postures varied from hunched over, forehead almost touching the screen, to leaning far back. Some students barely moved while others swayed in motion.

"When you were answering the phone, a boy's stool toppled over," said Kris.

Frustrated, Meesha protested, "We've had no serious accidents."

Kris turned toward the 1980s circulation desk where two assistants charged out books. An eighth grader and a sixth grader, they were busily

wandering barcodes, reading screens, pressing keys and stamping due dates. One balanced on a kick stool; the other on a storage crate.

Kris pointed out that a misstep could easily cause a sprained ankle.

"I see what you mean," confessed Meesha. "But there's nothing left in the budget for buying computer furniture."

Principle

AECT Code of Professional Ethics
Section 1 - Commitment to the
Individual
Principle 6

In fulfilling obligations to the individual, the members shall make reasonable efforts to protect the individual from conditions harmful to health and safety, including harmful conditions caused by technology itself.

Apply the principle to the scenario for yourself before going on to read the analysis.

Analysis

The first requirement for LMC furnishings is safety (Morris, 2004, pp. 281-283) but the quest for technology at Central Middle School may have displaced safety in Meesha's management responsibilities. While

the severity of Meesha's problems depends on how the situation is read, Kris shows appropriate ethical concern.

When heavy televisions fell from high carts and electric shocks were received from grounded equipment carts, our profession learned from the resulting injuries and fatalities. Regarding Central's LMC, what might be done remains a judgment call.

These are some possibilities: Not using any computers until there are proper workstations. Warning the students and gathering more observations. Removing the tippy stools. Moving the circulation computers to study tables where assistants can sit in chairs. Asking Central's principal for assistance in obtaining funds for new furnishings from the school district. Proposing an improvement project and applying for a grant or seeking donations from local businesses.

Technologization opportunities can mean that facilities grow not so much through management as by accretion. The moral lesson is that if technologists fail to consider repurposing furniture when purchasing recommended computer stations from reputable vendors, we may be undermining the "reasonable efforts" that we assume we have made.

References

- Morris, B. J. (2004). *Administering the school library media center* (4th ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.