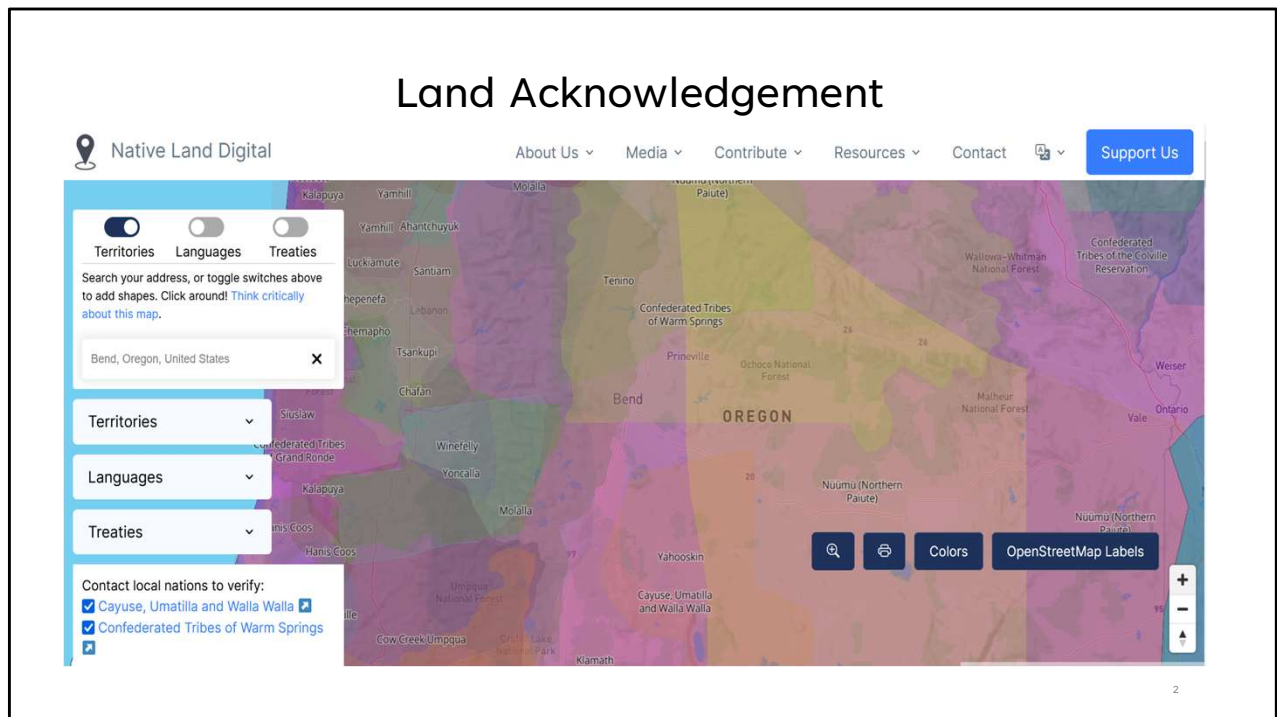


MORE VOICES, LESS BIAS

Collaborative Collection Policy Writing

Kerri Goergen-Doll (She/They), Oregon State University
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This map is from <https://native-land.ca/>

It demonstrates the overlapping territories of indigenous groups.

At OSU Libraries & Press, we participated in the This is Kalapuyan Land exhibit. We donated funds for other organizations to participate in the exhibit.

As a planning member of AITL, we donate to the Warm Springs Museum.

Just some reminders that we can do more than read out land acknowledgments.

<https://diversity.oregonstate.edu/feature-story/land-acknowledgement>

<https://www.landgrabu.org/>

AGENDA

Introduction

Policies

Bias

Process

Reflection

Discussion

INTRODUCTION

- Collection Council Model
- Very dated policies and collection information
- Gaps in understanding across the library
- EDIAR lens application
 - Increase voices
 - Reduce silos
 - Increase transparency and understanding
 - Support each other with bias checking

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The collection council at Oregon State University Libraries began the process of updating policies. Instead of picking a couple of people to manage the work, the council invited all library employees to attend weekly collection policy writing meetings and opened draft documents for asynchronous comments. The intent was to increase the number of different voices to reduce silos, increase transparency, and support bias checking. We have seen both synchronous and asynchronous participation from all our library departments. We would like to share our process and the elements that have been rewarding and challenging.

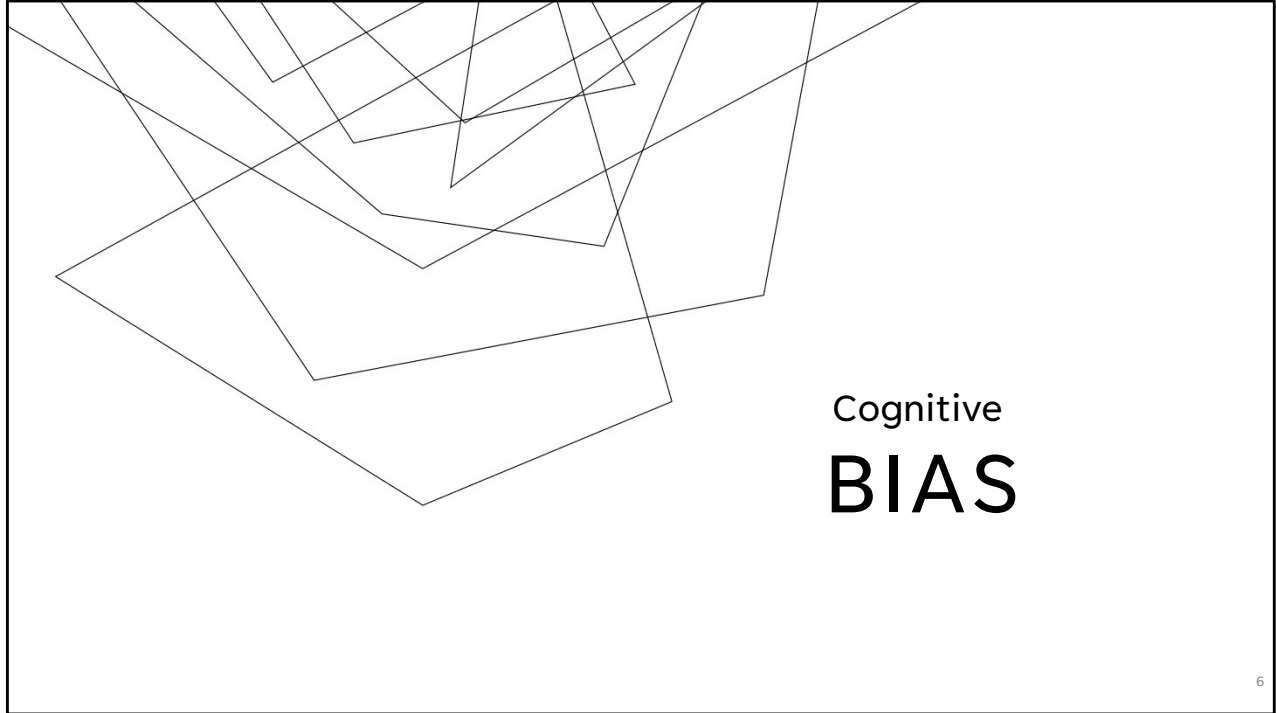


A policy is “a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party. From: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/policy>

“A principle or course of action adopted or proposed as desirable, advantageous, or expedient; esp. one formally advocated by a government, political party, etc. Also as a mass noun: method of acting on matters of principle, settled practice. (Now the usual sense.)” From: OED <https://www-oed-com.oregonstate.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/146842?>

Policy is a deliberate system of [guidelines](#) to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by a [governance](#) body within an organization. Policies can assist in both *subjective* and *objective* [decision making](#). Policies used in subjective decision-making usually assist senior management with decisions that must be based on the relative merits of a number of factors, and as a result, are often hard to test objectively, e.g. [work–life balance](#) policy... Moreover, Governments and other institutions have policies in the form of laws, regulations, procedures, administrative actions, incentives and voluntary practices. Frequently, resource allocations mirror policy decisions. From: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Policy>

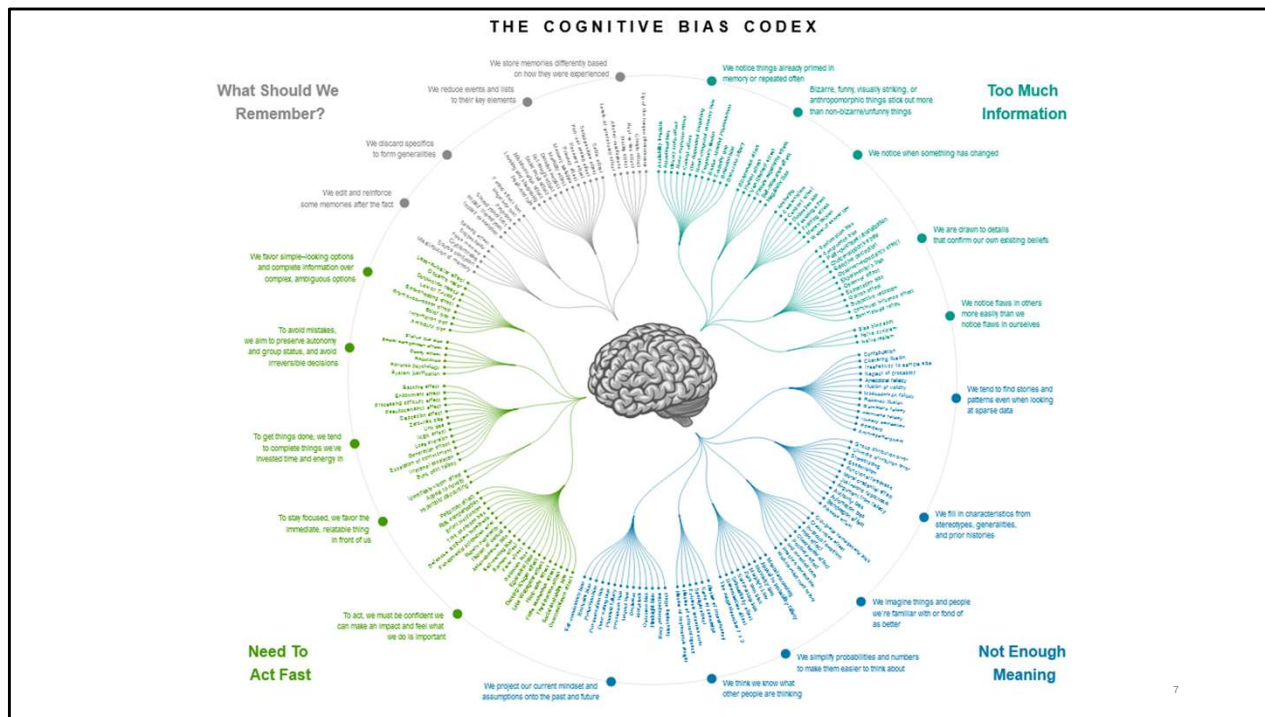
Discussion: sometimes it's hard to tell a policy from a procedure.



Errors in thinking when processing or interpreting information from your surroundings. These errors then affect the decisions and judgments that you make.

Some causes for these errors, or cognitive bias, are that you may have individual motivations or be encountering social pressure. Your emotions, energy, and mental attention can cause cognitive bias. Our brain also tries to help out by creating mental shortcuts called heuristics. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-cognitive-bias-2794963>

Heuristics can help people solve problems and make decisions faster, but the errors introduced should really make you reflect on relying on them for all situations.



From:
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/65/Cognitive_bias_codex_en.svg

- Some reminders for how to limit bias:
- Take it slow. Question when there is pressure to act fast.
 - Identify the end goal. Clearly articulate the expectation for the end goal or product and then let people engage in the process.
 - Allow for all the paths to get to the goal. There are a lot of different and inclusive ways for work to get done that gets us to that end goal.
 - Do an emotional scan. Don't let emotions affect your work in a negative way.



The responsibility for creating and maintaining general collection policies normally sits with the department head. In the past, the process would look something like this: the department head would draft a policy and the AUL and UL would review and approve. The policy would go to our library administrative and planning group for information sharing, possibly a library wide email would get sent, and then the policy would be put on the website. This is the process I used in 2015 when I updated our gifts and donation acceptance policy. In my email out to the library I had the ego to say that I expected the policy language would be enough for front line staff to rely on for saying “no”. My email inbox would indicate that my process was flawed as I continued to receive emails asking about donating material, and random boxes of donated material continued to show up.

By 2022, I’d had some opportunities to hear people speak on collection policy work especially related to DEI. Some of you may have heard or read of Dr. Andrea Jamison’s work on reviewing policies for commitments to DEI that were more than performative. In reflecting on that work, my past experiences, and my exposure to cognitive biases related to DEI work, I took a step back to think about the process of updating and creating policies instead of focusing on the DEI aspects integrated into the policies. My hypothesis was that if I included more voices, I would reduce bias and that would make room for DEI to be present naturally.

The Collection Council did an environmental scan to see what policies we had that needed updating and what new policies we might consider adding. We created a Google Folder that was open to everyone in our library and posted our list. Because the list was so long, we did send out an initial survey to have people help us identify a priority list. This also helped set up and frame the process as being collaborative across the organization. Since most every department engages with, relies on, or uses the collection, it was somewhat easy to outline why their engagement in this policy work could directly impact their jobs. A weekly meeting was set up and the invitation was sent out to everyone in the library. We would meet in the afternoon in the middle of the week to support those with varying schedules to be able to attend. The meetings are via Zoom to allow those that are remote to attend. We also sent out the list of policies that were identified so people generally knew what we would be working on. In cases where specific stakeholders were not in attendance, I would send out an email asking for asynchronous input or if they could arrange to attend the next meeting. Once we had completed a rough draft of a policy, I would send out the Google link and give people a week or two to provide input. Google allowed us to track changes so there was not a worry that people adding in comments/questions would get lost. Once a rough draft had asynchronous review, it would come back for final review by the group. As the director for collections, I was the final decision maker but often had consensus in moving a draft to final version. We have had some issues with making sure our policies are added to the website in a timely manner. We are currently looking at creating a Libguide in order to have more control over updating content.

January 2022

Collection Council begins gathering a list and setting up Google Drive. Set up a survey to get input on prioritizing policy updates.

February 2022

Library wide email/invitation sent for weekly collaborative meetings.

February 2023

Policy work completed. Whew!

March 2023

Launch of collaborative CD information writing for the web.

TIMELINE

REFLECTION

- Prewrite
- More voices
- Earlier start
- Learning & Working styles
- Establishing new norms

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Defining policies versus procedures. Identifying the decision making process.

Asking for a student voice to join. We employ many student employees and have a student based review board.

Understanding that not everyone works well or writes well in a zoom meeting. Also understanding that some people learn and process the information at different rates and that impacts the pace of the work. You can't go too fast.

This process has been used in other policy related work.

Discussion

- Who in your organization works on updating or developing policies? Is it usually more than one person? How do you get a seat at the table where policy is being discussed?
- What approaches have you seen used to address bias in your policy/procedure work?
- What perceived barriers are there to doing collaborative policy work?
- What additional voices would you consider adding to your process?



THANK YOU

Kerri Goergen-Doll

Kerri.goergen-doll@oregonstate.edu