The (mis)Information World of Moms for Liberty: A Digital Ethnographic Case Study

Jamie A. Becker[a] , Toni Anaya[a], Amanda Hovious[a]

[a]Emporia State University, United States

jbecke10@g.emporia.edu, tanaya@g.emporia.edu, ahoviou1@emporia.edu

ABSTRACT

Moms for Liberty (M4L) is an American organization that has played an outsized role in the dramatic increase in book bans and challenges in school and public libraries. This group provides an opportunity to study the various ways that information and attention is driven bi-directionally between the public and private spheres. The aim of this digital ethnographic case study was to better understand how the norms and values that underlie the small world of M4L influence the larger lifeworld and social milieus of communities. If public policy is ideologically constructed, what does this mean for information practitioners whose institutions exist in small worlds? Jaeger and Burnett's theory of information worlds and Engeström's activity theory model were combined to form the lens of interpretation to analyze the normative behavior and information values of M4L and the impact of its object of motivation for creating information poverty in the lifeworld through censorship efforts via political activism and propaganda. Data sources included public messaging from M4L and affiliated social media pages, primary sources from M4L's official website, official interview transcripts, news headline data, and relevant public policy data. This poster reports on the early findings and emerging implications of the study, as well as the potential value of the proposed theoretical-methodological framework for ethnographic and case study research within the information disciplines.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Censorship; Information policy; Information rights; Sociology of information; Social justice.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Moms for Liberty; Information worlds; Activity theory; Information poverty; Ethnography.