

## Bibliographic Skills Workshop – 3 Sample Annotations (Too Descriptive, Too Long, Just Right)

### Sample Annotation #1 – Too Descriptive

**American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. (April 2000). "Education Records and Privacy Rights." AACRAO Data Dispenser, pp. 1-4.**

Technology has allowed higher education institutions to process and exchange academic and administrative information with great speed and accuracy. However, this increasing push to collect and exchange more and more student data has led to a tension between the institution's need to maintain information about an individual with its obligation to protect the individual's rights regarding the collection, use and dissemination of personally identifiable information. In the education world, this privacy right is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1975 (FERPA). The author then gives an update on privacy legislation moving through five state legislatures.

#### **What's Wrong?**

Although this is a good summary of the article, it is only that, a descriptive summary. The writer didn't critique the author's arguments or react to the article. In this respect this sample is more similar to an abstract than an annotation.

### Sample Annotation #2 – Too Long

**American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. (April 2000). "Education Records and Privacy Rights." AACRAO Data Dispenser, pp. 1-4.**

Technology has allowed higher education institutions to process and exchange academic and administrative information with greater speed and accuracy. This advance has led to a tension between institutional needs and individual privacy rights. On the one hand, higher education institutions need to collect information for program evaluation, performance assessment, or policy analysis. On the other hand, data collectors have the responsibility to protect the private data that is collected. The paper raises the following policy questions: Should privacy interests rule? Should accountability interests rule? Is there a middle path that negotiates the two? The paper also raises the question of whether FERPA at 25 can remain relevant.

Privacy issues are becoming important policy issues at both the federal and state level. State lawmakers are attempting to craft legislation that addresses the public's concern for privacy while at the same time allows public entities to collect and exchange mission-essential information. Higher education administrators need to be concerned that amid the growing public outcry for more privacy protection, especially on the Internet, that laws are not passed that are overly broad or could hamper institutions in their data collection efforts.

I thought the article did a good job of framing some of the policy questions as related to student privacy. The author emphasized that privacy policy is a balancing act between an institution's need to collect information and the individual right to privacy. The author wisely warns that now is not the time to make overly prescriptive privacy laws that could unintentionally create impossible regulations for institutions who need to collect data. The article, however, raised more questions than it answered. I am particularly interested in this idea of balance, of reasoned privacy protection. Privacy rights are important, but organizations do need to collect data. What is a reasonable middle ground?

#### **What's Wrong?**

Here the author spent too much time summarizing, evaluating and reacting to the article. The author did not need to summarize all the arguments made, only the most critical.

### Sample Annotation #3 – Just Right

**American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. (April 2000). "Education Records and Privacy Rights." AACRAO Data Dispenser, pp. 1-4.**

Technology has allowed higher education institutions to process and exchange academic and administrative information with great speed and accuracy. However, this increasing push to collect and exchange more and more student data has led to a tension between the institution's need to maintain information about an individual with its obligation to protect the individual's rights regarding the collection, use and dissemination of personally identifiable information. In the education world, this privacy right is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1975 (FERPA). The author contends that it is becoming increasingly difficult for a pre-cyberspace law, such as FERPA, to adapt to a new technological reality. The author further contends that higher education administrators need to be concerned that amid the growing public outcry for more privacy protection that laws are not passed which are overly broad or could hamper an institution's exchange of mission-critical information. Already, education administrators have created elaborate bureaucracies to administer the law. Consequently, I would agree that the author is wise to warn that now is not the time to make overly prescriptive privacy laws that could unintentionally create even more difficult regulations to administer. A continual tweaking of FERPA is simply creating a law that is less responsive to privacy needs while at the same time more difficult to administer.

#### ***What's Right?***

All the main parts of an annotation are covered. The annotation **summarizes** the article and its main arguments, **evaluates** those arguments and then finally reacts to the argument, **connecting** it to other information or research.