

Computer Use and Internet Policy

The Library District establishes this Computer Use and Internet policy to ensure appropriate use of Internet resources.

1. Permitted Access: Library District computers offer information through access to the Library District's online catalog, subscriptions to full-text information resources, CD-ROM databases, and the Internet. Patrons using the computers must abide by this Computer Use Policy. The staff will manage computer resources in order to provide equitable access to all patrons. Library District computer access is primarily for reference and research purposes. Therefore, the Library District reserves the right to limit access to personal Internet e-mail, chat rooms, or games. Limited access is offered for use of MS Word. Library District staff will provide reference and research assistance as needed. Generally, the Library District staff will not provide technical support for e-mail.

Library District computers with Internet access are located in public areas shared by patrons of varying ages, background and sensibilities. Individuals are asked to be considerate about accessing potentially controversial information and images.

All access requires a valid Library District or MHLS library card. Guest privileges are provided through Borrower Services for out of System visitors.

The Library District reserves the right to regulate the amount of time patrons may use the computers, based on demand, as well as the right to charge for printing.

The Library District also reserves the right to limit the type and nature of storage devices used in order to maintain computer functionality.

2. Internet Content: Not all information available via the Internet is accurate, current and complete. Users are encouraged to evaluate carefully the validity of information accessed via the Internet. Users are cautioned that ideas, points of view and images found on the Internet may be graphic and/or controversial, inflammatory or offensive.
3. Internet Filtering: Filtering software seeks to block access to potentially offensive images and text. All computers are equipped with filtering software, except those computers associated with reference activity and adjacent to staff areas. All computers will be labeled in a manner as to clearly indicate if a filter is in use. Filtering software diminishes the likelihood that Internet searchers will inadvertently retrieve text or images that they may find offensive; but this software may also block access to sites that users would consider both useful and inoffensive. Filters are not foolproof.
4. Children's Use: Responsibility for, and any restriction of, a child's use of the Internet rest solely with the child's parent(s) or legal guardian. The Library District requires children and young adults under the age of 18 to have written parental permission to use the Internet. It is not possible for Library District staff to control specific information people may locate on the Internet. Just as libraries do not vouch for or endorse the viewpoints of written material in their collections, they do not do so for electronic information. Selection policies that serve to govern the purchase of written materials may not apply to material accessed electronically.

5. Prohibited Activities: Please be aware that display or transmission of obscenity, child pornography, or materials harmful to minors is illegal and is therefore prohibited. Such displays or transmissions may result in appropriate legal action including suspension of library privileges or police intervention.

The Library District's Internet resources may not be used to conduct a business, to advertise, or to perform any illegal activity, including the deliberate propagation of computer viruses. Furthermore, the computers may not be used to seek disallowed access to any other computer system. Any verified complaints as to illegal activity may result in a shut down of a computer station, the suspension of computer privileges, and possible referral to appropriate authorities.

6. Damage: All users must be responsible for their behavior and for any damages that occur due to misuse. They must agree not to attempt to alter, even temporarily, the computer set-up. Any vandalism, destructive behavior or illegal activities may result in police action as well as suspension of privileges. All users accept responsibility for the good working order of the computers and furniture. Parents will be held responsible for any damage done by their children.
7. Security/Confidentiality: Users are cautioned that security in an electronic environment such as the Internet cannot be guaranteed. All transactions, files, and communication are vulnerable to unauthorized access and use, and therefore should not be considered confidential. Internet users must respect the privacy of others by not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others.
8. Copyright Warning: All rules of copyright and personal property must be honored. Information in the form of text, graphics, music, video, software, and other media retrieved or utilized electronically should be considered protected.