

Title	Computer Use and Internet Access
Policy Number	
Date Approved	Dec. 2007
Amended	
Prepared by	Policy Committee

Purpose

The Mission of the Scott Township Public Library is directed towards the promotion of lifelong learning. As a part of that commitment, the Library provides free public access to computers, and to the diverse and unique resources available on the Internet for qualified Users. In accordance with the Internet Service Provider's (ISP's) policies, the Internet may be used for accessing material that is normally provided by the Library.

Internet Access

The Internet is an essential medium for obtaining and transmitting information of all types. Therefore, public access to the Internet is germane to the Library's mission. However, because the Internet is an unregulated medium in the USA, it also provides access to information that is inaccurate, illegal, and which may be offensive or disturbing. The Library cannot completely control a User's access to Internet resources. Access to the Internet is at the User's own risk.

Responsibilities of Library Staff and Users

The Library staff will not monitor a User's Internet use, except for the length of time in order to ensure an equal opportunity for access by qualified Users. The User, or the Parent/Guardian of a minor User, is responsible for the Internet session at all times. A Minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years. The Library reserves the right to terminate an Internet session that disrupts library services, or that involves behavior that violates any Library policy.

As with all Library resources, the Library affirms the right and responsibility of parents/guardians, not the Library staff, to determine and monitor their minor's use of the Internet. Parents are responsible for their minor's use of all the Library's resources and facilities. Those who believe that their minors cannot use the Library's computers and the Internet responsibly, are requested to either monitor their children's computer and Internet use, or to disallow usage privileges.

The ISP has installed filtering software or other technologies on the Library's computers with Internet access. Because such filtering software is not foolproof, it does not eliminate the possibility of seeing sexually explicit or other questionable material. Filters often block access to sites that Users would consider both inoffensive and useful. If this is the case, notify the staff, who can unblock a site for you temporarily.



Disclaimers

While the Library endeavors to provide access to resources of the highest quality, the Library specifically disclaims any warrant as to the accuracy, timeliness, authoritativeness, usefulness, or fitness for a particular purpose of any Internet resource. The Library will have no liability for direct, indirect, or consequential damages related to the use of information accessed through the Library's computers. Since software and information from any source, including the Internet, may contain computer viruses, Users are advised to utilize virus protection software on outside computers. The Library is not responsible for damage to outside computers, or for any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from use of the Library's computers. Since the Internet is a vast worldwide network with very few limitations or restrictions, the Library is not responsible for any content, or for any information obtained on the Internet.

Acceptable Use

- ❑ Only a Librarian may turn the computer on or off.
- ❑ Hardware and software may not be modified or destroyed.
- ❑ Adding, deleting, or changing any files on the computer's hard drive(s) is prohibited. Users may not load personal programs onto the computer.
- ❑ Copyright or trademarks may protect information available through the Internet. Transmission of copyrighted, pornographic, or material violating any federal or state regulation is prohibited. The Internet contains offensive material. The ISP cannot block all material that may be offensive, therefore the Library cannot be responsible for such material or information accessed.
- ❑ Any attempt to harm or destroy data is prohibited. This includes the creation and the distribution of computer viruses and spyware.

User Responsibilities

- ❑ Users must have a current library card to log into a computer. Minors must have Parent/Guardian consent for such use. The Parent/Guardian Consent Form is part of this policy.
- ❑ Users are allowed one hour of computer time on a first-come first-served basis, in fairness to all our Patrons. Additional time, up to a maximum of three hours per day, may be granted at the discretion of the staff on duty.
- ❑ Users may save files to removable media, as permitted by the configuration of the computer hardware and software. Users may:
 - provide their own pre-formatted media, or
 - purchase media at the Circulation Desk at the posted prices.
- ❑ Printing on plain paper is permitted, but optional; special paper or forms cannot be accommodated. The price per page (black and white only) is posted at the Circulation Desk, where Users may pay for, then retrieve them.



Response to Violations

The User's access to the Library's computers and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the forfeiture of the User's right to use the Library's computers. A User violates this policy by his or her own action. **Further, a User violates this policy if another person is permitted to use their account to access the Library's computers.**

Prohibited Uses That Violate The Law Or Encourage Others To Violate The Law

- ❑ It is a felony offense in Pennsylvania "to display or cause to display any explicit sexual material on any viewing screen in such manner that the display is visible in any establishment where minors, as part of the general public, may be exposed to view all or any part of such materials." (Title 18 Penna. Crime Code - Sect. 5903). Therefore, viewing of such materials in the Library is not permitted. Violation of this provision will result in the immediate termination of all computer privileges.
- ❑ Sending, receiving, or viewing pornographic materials, or materials that encourage the violation of law, or material that is harmful to minors. The term "harmful to minors" is defined by the Communications Act of 1934 (47 USC Section 254 [h][7]), as meaning any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that
 - taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion.
 - depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated, normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals.
 - taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.]
- ❑ Transmitting or posting offensive or harassing messages.
- ❑ Offering any substance for sale or use, the possession or use of which is prohibited by law.
- ❑ Sending or receiving confidential, trade secret, or copyrighted materials. Users should assume that all materials are copyright protected unless there is explicit permission on the materials to use them.

Prohibited Uses That Cause Harm To Others, Or Damage To Their Property

- ❑ Engaging in defamation (harming another's reputation by untruths).
- ❑ Transmitting a worm, virus, "Trojan horse," or other harmful form of programming or vandalism.
- ❑ Participating in "hacking" activities, or any form of unauthorized access to other computers, networks, or information systems.



Prohibited Uses That Jeopardize The Security of The Computers Or The Internet

- ❑ Disclosing or sharing any User's password with others.
- ❑ Impersonating another User.
- ❑ Using one's own software programs on the Library's computers.
- ❑ Altering the Library's computer settings.
- ❑ Damaging or modifying computer hardware or software.

Prohibited Uses That Compromise The Safety Or Security Of Minors:

- ❑ Giving others private information about one's self or others, including credit card numbers and social security numbers, or arranging a face-to-face meeting with someone "met" on the Internet without a Parent/Guardian's permission.

General Considerations and Limitations

- ❑ Attempting to bypass login security is prohibited.
- ❑ Please advise the Circulation Desk if a computer is not working properly. The Librarian will assist you as time permits.
- ❑ The Library staff is available for a limited amount of assistance in using the computers and the Internet. Since they must assist all Library patrons equally, they cannot spend large amounts of time guiding Users in the use of the computers and the Internet. However, the Library staff may be able to offer searching suggestions.
- ❑ Computer usage, including all printing, must be completed 15 minutes before the Library closes.
- ❑ Only one User and one observer may be at any computer at any time. The logged-in User is held responsible for all activity.
- ❑ Minors may use (and observe the use of) computers and the Internet only after a Parent/Guardian Consent Form has been signed in the presence of a Library staff member. The Parent/Guardian must have a valid library card. The Parent/Guardian Consent Form must be signed in person, at the Library, and identification must be shown.
- ❑ Parents/guardians, not the Library staff, are responsible for all information selected and/or accessed by their children. Parents/Guardians may restrict only their own minors from using Library computers and Internet resources.
- ❑ Loud conversations or other disruptive behavior is both unacceptable and prohibited by other Library policies.
- ❑ Only the Internet Explorer provided on the Library's computer is permitted to be used for Internet access. Use of any other programs for Internet access is prohibited.
- ❑ Since the security of the information that Users provide over the Internet is not guaranteed, the Library recommends that personal information such as credit card numbers and Social Security numbers not be placed on the Internet.
- ❑ The Library's E-mail address is not available for personal use, nor is the Library able to make E-mail accounts available. There are many web based providers of free E-mail accounts such as Yahoo, Google, and Hotmail. The Library is not responsible for the



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emails that you send and receive at any email account, even though done on Library computers.

- Although the Library staff cannot provide extensive training about, or assistance with, computers and the Internet, the Library does offer such training to the community in the form of after-hours classes. Please inquire about them at the Circulation Desk.

