



PORTAGE LAKE DISTRICT LIBRARY

Where your imagination takes flight

Internet Access Policy

Background/Philosophy

The library provides open access to the Internet as an integral part of its mission. The Internet is a worldwide computer network that provides easy access to a massive body of information. The resources available on the Internet expand the Library's information services well beyond traditional collections and electronic resources. In providing community access to the Internet, the Portage Lake District Library enhances its existing collection in size and depth, and provides the opportunity for any citizen to utilize the exciting resources on the Internet.

Not everyone currently has or can afford access to the Internet in their homes or businesses. The Library can "level the playing field" by providing everyone with open access to this valuable information resource. Even those who can afford access may need it only intermittently and may not wish to pay for it on a regular basis.

Intellectual Freedom/Right to Privacy

The same standards of intellectual freedom, privacy and confidentiality endorsed by the Portage Lake District Library for traditional resources and services also apply to electronic media, including usage of the Internet. The Library has a policy of not prioritizing by information need (everyone's information need is important to him or her), and it is not restricted by residency. The Library seeks to protect the First Amendment rights of its patrons and their individual right to privacy. However, Internet users must be sensitive to the fact that workstations are in public areas and, therefore, images on the screen are subject to view by a wide audience.

The workstations owned and operated by the Portage Lake District Library will be used for educational, informational and recreational purposes only; they may not be used for unauthorized, illegal or unethical purposes. Patrons may not send, receive or display text or graphics that may be construed as obscene by Michigan Law.

In order for the Library to abide by the certain laws (Michigan Act 455, and CIPA) enacted to protect the rights of younger patrons, and because the Library receives federal funding for public Internet terminals, every computer terminal at the Portage Lake District Library with Internet access will use a technology protection measure (ie: filtering software) that protects against access to Internet materials that are obscene, child pornography, and, during use by minors under 18 years old, harmful to minors.

There sometimes arises a need to override the filtering software for an adult patron's use for bona fide research or other lawful purposes. In accordance with the CIPA act, the Library is required to allow any adult patron access to an unfiltered Internet terminal; the adult patron (18 years or older)

need only request a Library staff worker to temporarily unblock the Internet terminal's filtering software. The Library staff worker will temporarily disable the filter without inquiring into the adult patron's purpose for the request as quickly as it is technically possible.

However, because the Internet terminals are in a public place where the terminal's screen is visible to others, patrons using an unfiltered terminal are asked not to view any Internet sites which might be potentially offensive to other patrons. If a patron consistently violates this rule, his or her Internet privileges will be suspended at the Library, at the discretion of the Library Director.

If a patron, regardless of age, feels that a particular web site has been erroneously blocked by the filtering software, he or she may request that the filter be disabled for that particular web site only.

Information Disclaimer

The Internet offers open access to information, ideas and commentary from around the world, and a vast array of tools and resources for different age levels and points of view. However, not all sources on the Internet provide information that is accurate, complete, current or legal. The Portage Lake District Library does not endorse the viewpoints or vouch for the accuracy of information obtained through the Internet. The Library does not monitor, and has no control over the information accessed through the Internet, and cannot be held responsible for its content. Most definitely, some resources and Internet sites contain material that some patrons will find personally offensive or inappropriate for children.

The Library, through its participation in Michigan Electronic Library (located at www.mel.org) can and does recommend interesting and useful destinations and resources for our patrons to explore. Staff are ready to assist patrons in utilizing this valuable resource.

Use of the Internet by Children

The Library staff does not control the Web sites that children may select on the Internet. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to work with their children to develop acceptable rules of Internet use.

Parents/guardians and children are also encouraged to read *Child Safety On the Information Highway* (located at www.safekids.com/child_safety.htm), jointly produced by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Interactive Services Association. Effective August 27, 2003 the Portage Lake District Library Board of Trustees has chosen to support the use of filtering software for all Internet workstations in the Library. The Board recognizes that such filtering software is far from perfect; it does allow some inappropriate content to pass through, and can also block constitutionally protected Internet sites from view.

Minors under 18 years of age may use the Internet terminals located in the Youth Services area. Individuals who are 18 years of age or older may only use the Internet terminals in the Youth Services area if they are *accompanying someone who is a minor computer user*. Likewise, only individuals who are 18 years or older may use the Internet terminals located in the Adult Services

area. Minors may only use the terminals located in the Adult Services area if they are accompanied by a person who is 18 years or older.

It is the parent or guardian who sets family standards and values and, therefore, the Library cannot usurp that right nor assume that responsibility. The Internet, since it should be no different than TV, movies, books and magazines, is a marvelous opportunity for parents/guardians to hold discussions with their children about their family's standards. It is strongly recommended that parents/guardians work with their children when they are using the Internet.

Printing

The Library currently charges 10 cents per page for black & white printing and 30 cents for color from its workstations. The color printer is only accessible from wireless devices.

Downloading

Patrons may download information from the Internet to their own media. Under no circumstances may a user download or save anything to the hard drive of any Library workstation or to a network drive.

Use of the Workstations

The Library does not limit the number of individuals using a single workstation because we recognize that group work can be a valuable learning experience. However, if a group creates a disturbance to the effective use of the Library by others, they will be asked to correct their behaviors, disband, and/or leave the building, as appropriate.

All of the Library's workstations are available on a first-come basis. The number of these workstations accessing the Internet is limited, so we ask patrons to be considerate of others. Time on the Internet is limited to 1 hour.

Two workstations in the Library are configured only for text-based access to the Library's online catalog and electronic databases. They are clearly marked. No graphical access to the Internet is provided on these workstations.

One workstation is set aside for downloading digital library materials. It is clearly marked. This workstation is only to be used for downloading digital materials.

One workstation is set aside for genealogical or Foundation Center research. It is clearly marked. This workstation is only to be used for these purposes.

Patrons should notify Library staff immediately if they experience any problems with the equipment or software.

Under no circumstances may patrons use their personal software or equipment on the Library's workstations or network. Hacking or any other illegal activities will not be tolerated, and if caught the patron will be turned over to the appropriate authorities.

Instruction

Providing instruction in how to use and evaluate informational resources is part of the Library's role. This is certainly true with the Internet, although for the Library staff, as with their patrons, different individuals have varying levels of expertise in using the Internet.

Staff will devote a *reasonable* amount of time assisting individual Library users with the Internet where needed. They cannot devote large amounts of time to each patron because staff members scheduled for floor duty are handling many information requests from many individuals.

Copyright

Materials obtained or copied on the Internet may be subject to laws that govern making reproductions of copyrighted works. A work protected by copyright may not be copied without permission of the copyright owner unless the proposed use falls within the definition of "Fair Use." Fair Use is more fully explained at the American Library Association's Internet site located at copyright.ala.org Patrons are responsible for compliance with all international, national and state laws governing copyrighted materials.

Indemnification

Through the Library's Web site, we provide links to specific sites selected by staff because of their useful content. These follow the same selection policies in place for other informational and/or recreational resources provided by the Library. However, all Internet resources may contain material of a controversial nature. Our patrons choose which electronic materials and sites they access on the Internet. Even with the use of filtering software, the Library cannot protect patrons from information they might consider offensive or inaccurate. Filtering software is inherently imprecise and flawed. It inevitably will block access to a vast array of constitutionally protected material on the Internet. Because of its technological limitations, the filtering software is also incapable of protecting against access to Internet material that is obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors. It remains the responsibility of the user (or the user's parent, guardian, or caregiver in the case of minors) to determine what is appropriate.

Because the patron is the selector in using the Internet by making individual choices and decisions, patrons shall comply with all age restrictions governing access to specific sites, as limited by the content provider, to usage by persons 18 years of age or older. Some commercial databases on the Internet require a fee. These fees are the responsibility of the patron, not the Library.

In no event shall the Portage Lake District Library have any liability for lost profits, or for any direct or indirect special, punitive, or consequential damages, or any liability to any third party,

even if the Library is advised of the possibility of such damages, arising from use of its connection to the Internet.

Misuse of the electronic resources of the Library, or of Internet access, shall result in the loss of computer privileges for the patron for a period of time to be determined by the Library Director. If a patron feels that his or her computer privileges have been denied for invalid reasons, he or she may make a personal appeal to the Portage Lake District Library Board of Trustees at one of their regularly scheduled open meetings.

The purpose of this *Internet Access Policy* is to insure the best use of and access to the Internet for the greatest number of Library patrons. This policy is subject to change, and will be reviewed by the Library Board of Trustees, either annually or as need arises.

Approved by the Portage Lake District Library Board of Trustees, June 26, 2002.

Amended:

October 8, 2003

February 23, 2005

October 1, 2015