

JEFFERSON COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Purpose

The Library offers Internet access to its patrons to give them the ability to seek ideas, information and commentary from around the world.

The Library's Role

Unlike other resources in the Library, the Internet is a largely unregulated resource. The Library has no effective control over Internet content and no control of the intentions of Internet content providers.

As with all information resources available in the library, Jefferson County Library does not monitor what patrons choose to access. Therefore, patrons themselves are responsible for selection of Internet sources from which they gather information.

Although the Internet provides users with a wide array of excellent information, the Internet is unregulated and materials accessible through it may be outdated, inaccurate, inappropriate or offensive. The Library does not control information found on the Internet and therefore cannot be held responsible for its content. Use of the Internet carries with it a responsibility to evaluate the quality of the information, and library patrons use, it at their own risk.

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

It is the Library's policy to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the June 23, 2003 United States Supreme Court decision relating thereto. CIPA compliance requires the application of technology protection measures that block visual depictions that are obscene or visual depictions of child pornography, for customers of all ages and that, in addition, block visual depictions that are "harmful to minors" for all minors 16 years and under. In doing so the Library recognizes that the required technology protection measures may not be fully effective in blocking intended sites and may inadvertently block unintended sites. As a result, some objectionable sites may not be blocked. Customers 17 years and older, may request that the protection measure be disabled. The Library will do so in a timely manner. To ensure access to Internet sites that have been mistakenly blocked, the Library will provide a method by which customers may request that such sites be unblocked. After staff review, the library will have erroneously blocked sites unblocked, in a timely manner.

User Rights

The Library upholds and affirms the right of each individual to have access to constitutionally protected material. The Library also affirms the right and responsibility of parents and legal guardians to determine and monitor their children's use of Library materials and resources. The Library will not limit a minor's access to the Internet or to Internet resources beyond that required by CIPA. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to actively participate in and supervise their children's Internet use in the Library.

User Responsibilities

Use of the computers at the Library is a privilege, which requires users to be civil, courteous and lawful. While accessing the Internet, patrons may not use library computers for any illegal purpose or activity, and must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws. Patrons may not use library computers for unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking" and other unlawful activities, or change the settings and configurations of public access computers. Patrons may not

use computers to violate copyright protection or software licensing agreements. The Library is committed to providing an environment free from sexual harassment. Patrons may not display on screens or printers sexually explicit graphics or other materials that are contrary to state and federal sexual harassment laws.

Some content is not protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. No patron is permitted to use a library computer to view obscenity, child pornography, or to display this illegal content; and no minor (16 and under) is permitted to view materials that are "harmful to minors." The legal status of any particular content can only be determined by a court of law.

Supporting Parents and Guardians

The Library does not presume to take the place of the parent or legal guardian. However, the library is committed to taking steps to create positive opportunities to make appropriate use of library resources, and to support parents and legal guardians in their efforts to guide their own children. For example, the library provides:

- Library staff available to train parents, caregivers and children who are unfamiliar with Internet access and usage.
- "Search Engines for Kids" on the library web site.

Supervising Children's Use

The library also offers the following recommended guidelines for parents and guardians to ensure that children have positive online experiences, whether at home or in the library:

- Use the Internet as a family. Join your children in Internet exploration.
- Explore the wide range of available information and tell your children about sites that you consider inappropriate for them.
- Encourage children to use sites recommended on the Library's website and counsel them to avoid sites you consider unsuitable.
- Provide guidelines for your children on the amount of time they spend online, just as for television viewing.
- Instruct children who are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of electronic communication to follow basic safety guidelines: never give out personal information (name, address, phone number etc.) never arrange via computer to meet someone and never respond to messages that are threatening or suggestive, remembering that people online may not be who they say they are.
- Teach children to be good online consumers. As with print information, consider the source, date, and accuracy of online information.
- Teach children about the legal and ethical risks associated with unauthorized access ("hacking") to proprietary web sites.

Continuing Oversight

Library trustees and staff will continue to evaluate the Library's Internet policies and procedures and make modifications as needed to insure equitable and safe access for all. The policy is subject to change as necessity dictates.

Policy adopted: March 13, 1997

Amended: October 9, 2002

Amended: May 12, 2004

Amended: September 8, 2004