

Stillwater

Public Library

Policy Title: Internet Public Use Policy
Date adopted: 03/04/1997
Date amended: 1998; 07/1999; 07/2002; 04/2004; 07/2004; 10/2006; 2/2009;
12/14/2021
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to affirm Stillwater Public Library's (the "Library") role in providing public access to the internet and to clarify patron responsibilities associated with internet use in the library. Internet use in the library means using the Library's network to access the internet either on library workstations or through any wireless device used to access the library's wireless internet connection.

Principles

Public access to the internet is integral to the Library's mission. Public access to the internet allows patrons to:

- Access online resources and services
- Communicate and engage with others
- Create content
- Complete transactions with public, nonprofit, and private entities

The Library provides public access to the internet in accordance with state and federal laws and the policies of the Library Board. Collection, retention, handling and disclosing of patron data is covered under the Library's Data Practices Policy.

Scope of Access

Public access to the internet is available via library workstations and wireless access. In accordance with the federal Children's Internet Protection Act, internet access on all Library computer workstations is filtered. Filtering software is used to filter out proxy sites, and sites that pose a security risk to the network. It is also used to filter out obscene materials as defined by Minnesota Statute § 617.241. However, no internet filter is completely effective. Some websites that should be blocked may not be, while other websites that should not be blocked may be. Library patrons who encounter a site that they believe should or should not be blocked are encouraged to contact Library staff. Additionally, patrons 17 years and older may request that Library staff temporarily disable the filtering software when using a Library computer workstation in the library, so long as their internet use does not violate the criteria set forth herein. Library staff may ask for photo identification to verify age in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act. Due to technical limitations, the Library will not disable filtering on its wireless network.

Library workstations support a variety of software programs that expand a workstation's capabilities and increase a patron's ability to utilize the internet. The Library may establish time limitations to ensure fair and equitable access to library workstations.

The Library Board, City of Stillwater, and its employees assume no responsibility for damages of any type arising from patron use of the internet through the Library's network. This includes, but is not limited to, damages to equipment or data on a patron's personal computer resulting from accessing web sites or from software or data downloaded using the Library's internet connection or a security breach of a patron's data or personal information and/or accounts.

Privacy and Security

The Library makes no representations or guarantees that information accessed or transmitted on computers, including personally-owned laptops and smart devices, or the internet is private, secure, uninterrupted, error or virus free, or that internet content is accurate, reliable, or safe to access or download. Additionally, the Library's wireless network is not encrypted, meaning that information sent or received over the network could potentially be intercepted or viewed by another user and another user could potentially access and change your files and programs.

Use of the Library's hardware, software, computers, internet, wireless network, and electronic information resources is entirely at the patron's own risk. The Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from or relating to a patrons' use of its devices, hardware, software, computers, internet, wireless network, and electronic information resources.

Patron Responsibilities

The freedom to access information is a fundamental right, but use of the Library's equipment and resources is a privilege. Library patrons must respect the rights of fellow patrons and Library staff when using Library computers and equipment, personal devices, and the internet.

Patrons acknowledge that the content on the internet is not managed or governed by any entity and therefore they may encounter materials that are inaccurate, controversial, or that they consider offensive. Library patrons are advised to exercise critical judgement when using internet information, realizing that accuracy, completeness and currency can vary widely on internet sites.

Patrons using the Library's public access internet are solely responsible for choosing and evaluating internet resources. The Library does not and cannot monitor or control information found on the internet and is not responsible for any internet content. Library access to the internet does not imply sponsorship or endorsement of any online content or viewpoint.

Patrons recognize that their use of the internet is conducted in a public place shared by many. Patrons are subject to the Library's Public Conduct in the Library Policy. The Library expects that individuals will use the internet responsibly and respect the rights of others. Library access to the internet, and even to the Library itself, may be denied for individuals who do not follow Library policies.

Patrons acknowledge that the Library cannot protect the privacy of data that is transmitted to third parties via the internet.

Patrons shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Examples of unacceptable computer and internet use includes but is not limited to:

- Library patrons may not use the library's internet access to view, print, distribute, display, send or receive images, or graphics of material that violates laws relating to child pornography.

- Library patrons may not knowingly exhibit or display any material which is harmful to minors in its content or material that is obscene in any place of public accommodation where minors are or may be present and where minors are able to view the material.
- Library patrons must adhere to all copyright laws and may not copy or distribute materials (e.g. with the use of file sharing software) without the permission of the owner. Patrons who do so may be subject to criminal and civil liability.
- Library patrons may not degrade or disrupt equipment or system performance, attempt to gain unauthorized access to databases, websites or electronic resources or entities, invade the privacy of individuals, or engage in any activity that is deliberately offensive or creates an intimidating or hostile environment.
- Violating software, database, or other license agreements.
- Vandalizing the property or data of another patron or Library staff.
- Modifying hardware, software, programs or configurations on Library computers.
- Intercepting, monitoring, disrupting, or impeding other patrons' communications on the wireless network, or altering other patrons' files or programs.
- Using personal software, downloading software, or bookmarking internet sites on Library computers.
- Plugging in any device to a Library computer that requires software or driver installation.

Failure to follow this policy may result in eviction from the Library, and may include a trespass order or arrest. Violation of state and federal laws will be referred to the proper authorities for legal action.

Parent or Legal Guardian's Responsibility for Monitoring their Minor Child

Parents and guardians are responsible for their children's access to and use of Library resources, including computers and the internet. Parents and guardians are encouraged to supervise, actively participate in, and develop rules for their children's computer and internet use, including the use of email, forums, chat rooms and other means of online communication. Any restrictions placed on a child's access to the internet on the Library's network is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

Associated Policies and Laws

- Stillwater Public Library: Public Conduct in the Library Policy
- Stillwater Public Library: Patron Data Privacy
- Minnesota Statute § 134.50. [Internet Access; Libraries](#)
- Minnesota Statute § 617.241. [Obscene Materials and Performances; Distribution and Exhibition Prohibited; Penalty](#)
- Minnesota Statute § 617.293. [Harmful materials](#)
- United States. [Children's Internet Protection Act](#)

The most current policy supersedes any and all previous policies issued relative to this subject.