

Policy on Public Use of Internet

To fulfill its mission of providing public access to information of all types in a wide range of formats, the Middle Country Public Library offers access to Internet resources. Internet users must comply with all Library policies. It is to be recognized that any user's traffic that crosses another network may be subject to another institution's acceptable use policy.

The Internet is a unique resource allowing access to many valuable local, national, and international sources of information. However, some information found on the Internet may be inaccurate, incomplete, dated, or offensive to some individuals. A responsible information consumer must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of the information discovered.

Choosing and Evaluating Sources

The Internet is a series of communication linkages leading to a highly diverse array of informational content. Patrons use it at their own risk. In choosing sources to link to/from its website, the Library follows its materials selection guidelines. The Library is not responsible for the content of the Internet, changes in content of the sources to which the Library website refers, or for the content of sources accessed through secondary links. In an effort to assist its users, the Library has created websites for the general population, teens, and children to assist guiding them to sources that are believed to be accurate, complete, and current and that provide a wealth of information on a local, national, and global level.

Access by Minors

The Library has determined that compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act is not in the best interests of the community. The Library firmly believes that the valuable information and engagement available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure information that is not consistent with their or the Library's educational and research goals. Parents or legal guardians must assume responsibility for determining which Library resources are appropriate for their own children. Parents or legal guardians must guide their children in the use of the Internet and inform them regarding materials they should not access. The Library affirms and acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians to monitor and determine their children's access to materials and resources including those available through the Internet.

a. To address the issue of access by minors to inappropriate material on the Internet, including material may be harmful to minors, the Library:

- i. Develops and maintains special websites for children and teens.
- ii. Links to Internet safety guidelines on the Internet.

b. To address the issue of the safety and security of minors when using email, and other forms of direct electronic communications, as well as the unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors, the Library urges minors and their parents or guardians to observe the following safety guidelines:

- i. Never provide identifying information such as home address, your location, school name, or telephone number.

ii. Parents or guardians should determine whether personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information should be revealed.

iii. Never arrange contact, in person, with anyone met online without parent approval and/or supervision.

iv. Never respond to messages that make one uncomfortable or are suggestive, obscene, or threatening. Advise a parent or guardian if you receive such a message.

v. Parents or guardians should report an incident to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678 if they are aware of the transmission of child pornography.

vi. Respect that not everyone online is honest with their identity, age, gender, and intentions.

vii. Note that what you read on the Internet may not always be true.

Rules Governing Use

The purpose of the Library's computer mechanisms is to provide free open access to the Internet and to attendant electronic services such as e-mail and selected information sources. The following guidelines are presented in order to facilitate open access with as few limitations as possible.

1. Any use of this service for unlawful purposes is prohibited.
2. Using this service to harass or invade the privacy of other users or to interfere with their work is prohibited.
3. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance are prohibited.
4. Users may not copy commercial software and all users agree to abide by copyright laws.
5. Use of Library computers for hacking or any other unlawful activity is strictly prohibited.

Use of any Internet information obtained is at the user's own risk. It is up to each user to determine what is appropriate. The Library will not be responsible for any possible damages, resulting from but not limited to loss of data, nondeliveries, misdeliveries, service interruptions, or the viewing of offensive and/or inappropriate material.

Public Users' Security

Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding users' activities. However, the Library does not capture and store any personal information regarding individuals who access the Library's website, except where users voluntarily choose to submit such data via e-mail, or by using an electronic form, or inquiring about and registering for Library services. Personal data voluntarily provided by users and visitors will be used exclusively for providing the user with requested information and/or assistance. The Library maintains administrative information such as computer login records, firewall transaction records, web page usage records, and mail records for statistical purposes only. The Library will not release information pertaining to the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by subpoena or necessary for the proper operation of the Library.

While the Library is committed to implementing and maintaining cybersecurity best-practices on our networks, the cybersecurity landscape is constantly evolving. It is incumbent on our patrons to make sure their personal information is protected. The Library is not responsible for any damage, physical or digital, to any equipment used on and/or connected to our networks. It is the Patron's responsibility to

sign out of all personal accounts on public equipment, use care when sharing personal information and entering login information on websites and internet services, and downloading files only from trusted sources. Library staff is unable to provide assistance with equipment and devices not belonging to the library, or with patron accounts and services not administered by the library.

Adopted March 19, 1997 by the Board of Trustees of the Middle Country Public Library

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