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│            Sample Library Internet Policies:            │
│      Employees/Volunteers, Patrons, Young People        │
│  This document definitely requires formal approval from appropriate │
│   supervisors in that there are powerful legal consequences that can │
│      result from any such policy, rules, or regulations.  │
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Employee and Volunteer Computer Use

This Internet policy covers e-mail, Internet, and computer system usage for employees/volunteers, patrons, and youth in family or other legal guardianship who are members of the _____ Library community.

Staff library computers are to be used almost entirely for business purposes. All files and messages are subject to review by the library administrators and other legal access from outside individuals or agencies. Library administrators may access, search, and monitor voice mail, e-mail, Internet history, documents, or files of any employee that are created, stored on, or deleted from library computers. Please do not expect all communications to be confidential or private.

Limited personal use is permitted while on breaks; however, personal use that interferes with employees' work, violates library mission, involves private information, or is illegal (e.g., changing computer settings, draining computer memory, hate mail, giving out a social security number, stock trading, or pornography) is prohibited. All inappropriate use is prohibited, including but not limited to transmitting or downloading of material that is discriminatory, defamatory, harassing, insulting, offensive, pornographic, or obscene.

Copying and sending any confidential or proprietary information, or software that is protected by copyright, other laws protecting intellectual property, or privacy law is prohibited. This includes unauthorized access by employees of other employees' electronic communications or access of electronic records of clients. Any misuse will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination and criminal prosecution.

Sharing, discussing, or otherwise using client or library information is grounds for dismissal, except in cases explicitly authorized by administrators, such as meeting state requirements for reporting.

Client Computer Use
The [city] library serves the evolving educational and cultural needs of the greater _____ community. Our computers are part of creating a welcoming place for residents to gather and to learn. The Internet is an essential medium for obtaining and transmitting information of all types. Therefore, public access to the Internet for recreation, information access, and information use is germane to the library's mission.

When available, a trained staff member or volunteer can help residents locate the materials and information they need for work, personal tasks, and recreation. Access to the library's computer network and Internet is a privilege, not a right. Residents found violating library policy will not be allowed to use the computers unless an administrator authorizes further access. Computer resources are available [on a first come, first served basis] [only when a library staffer is available to monitor use] [to those who have completed basic computer use training or demonstrated appropriate computer knowledge] [on a priority need basis determined by library staff] [some combination of those options].

The Internet is an unregulated medium. The Internet provides access to some information that is outdated, inaccurate, or incomplete, or that some people may find offensive or disturbing. The library does not control or monitor the content of the Internet. Internet resources are not subject to the same selection criteria that the library uses for other materials. The library specifically disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy, timeliness, authoritativeness, usefulness, or fitness for a particular purpose of information, or other aspect of material obtained on the Internet. The library will have no liability for direct, indirect, or consequential damages related to the use of information accessed through the library's Internet service.

Since software and information downloaded from any source, including the Internet, may contain computer viruses, residents are requested to report any sign of unusual computer service. They are also required to refrain from activities that facilitate virus delivery such as accepting email from unknown sources, downloading materials, or visiting unfamiliar group forums.

The library is not responsible for damage to users' files or computers or for any loss of data, damage or liability that may occur from use of the library's computers.

Internet computers may only be used for legal and ethical purposes. Examples of unacceptable use include, but are not limited to, the following:
  • viewing obscene material;
  • destroying, damaging, or modifying equipment, software, or data belonging to the library;
  • introducing computer viruses;
  • compromising the safety and security of minors when using e-mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electric communications;
  • using the workstation to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via the Internet.

In addition, display of sexually explicit graphics is inappropriate in a public environment and is prohibited.

Youth Computer Use

Children and youth in family and institutional care have access to the computer primarily for educational and recreational purposes. Logistical access to computers and use of internet computers is exactly the same as that for adults; that is, time and use limits apply. The parent or guardian of a minor is solely and fully responsible for permitting their minor's access to and use of computers. Parents and guardians are urged to permit access only when their minors have been taught Internet safety according to the "Child Safety On the Information Highway" (http://www.safekids.com/child-safety-on-the-information-highway/) site, which is jointly produced by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Interactive Services Association.

It is a violation of library policy for minors to give others private information about themselves or others, including names, addresses, phone numbers, credit card and social security numbers; or to arrange face-to-face meetings with people they have "met" on the computer network or Internet without a parent's permission. Residents are responsible for monitoring their children's Internet use. Since the library's Internet access is not filtered, children can, for example, easily obtain materials of an objectionable source or build unsafe online relationships.