

Brooks Memorial Library

PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTING: ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Purpose

As part of its ongoing mission, Brooks Memorial Library seeks to serve the learning, information, and personal enrichment needs of people of all ages in the Brattleboro community. To pursue this mission, the Library seeks to expand individual access to information through the use of current technologies, such as public Internet access, online research databases, computer applications, and printing.

The Internet is a decentralized network of computers whose files have been made available to anyone with Internet access. As an information resource it is not within the scope of the Library's materials selection policy. Therefore, the Library is unable to assume responsibility for the quality of information accessed through the Internet. Parents or guardians, not the Library, are responsible for the information selected and/or accessed by their children under the age of sixteen.

The Library may provide designated areas where patrons may access the Internet on their own equipment capable of receiving wireless signals. The Library cannot assume responsibility for the security of personally owned hardware and software used on Library premises.

The staff and Board of Trustees support the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and all of its interpretations, including *Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks*. The Library supports access to information on all subjects that serve the needs or interests of each user. All policies may be viewed on the Library's Web site.

Currently, the American Library Association does not endorse using Internet filters in libraries because they block access to information that is legal and useful, and because they cannot distinguish between protected and unprotected speech. Filters are not installed on any computers at Brooks Memorial Library, including those in the Children's Room.

Acceptable Use

The freedom to access information is a fundamental right, but use of library equipment is a privilege. Users shall respect the rights of other computer users, library patrons, and staff, in keeping with the library's behavior code. This includes the use of personal devices that use the wireless capacity of the library. Users shall respect the policies, rights and conventions of all the organizations and individuals who use the Internet.

Unacceptable uses include but are not limited to the following:

- Use of the resources for any purpose that violates federal, state or local laws
- Harassment of others
- Libeling or slandering others
- Destruction of or damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to the library or other users
- Disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications, including excessive use of the Library's Internet capacity
- Infringement upon the rights and privacy of others
- Unauthorized use of computer accounts or access codes
- Unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material
- Use of Internet by a child whose parent/guardian has not signed the Internet User Agreement for Children (under 16 years of age)
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information regarding minors
- Downloading of external applications to the hard drive of the public access computers. However, temporary saving of personal files to the hard drive is permitted
- Intentional interference with or circumvention of normal operation of Library technology

Harassment

Although the freedom to access information is a fundamental right, library users must exercise that right responsibly by respecting the rights of others. The Library will not censor access to the Internet. Nevertheless, as a department of the Town of Brattleboro, the Library is committed to providing an environment free from harassment. Display of sexually explicit graphics or otherwise offensive material is inappropriate for an open public environment and is prohibited. Although the Library takes harassment violations very seriously, there will be no supervision by the Library of what is accessed via the Library's public access computers. This responsibility falls to library patrons.

Requirements for Use

- The Library has software that manages access to the public access computers in defined time slots. Extensions of the time limit may be granted at the Library's discretion.
- Users must have a current library card or computer user card in good standing in order to make a reservation or claim an available computer.
- The Library provides assistance with using computers for information retrieval, but the Library cannot guarantee assistance with other computer uses.
- There will be a printing charge after the first page. Payment is made at the circulation desks.
- Disks for downloading data may be purchased at the circulation desks.
- Parents or legal guardians of children under the age of 16 must assume responsibility for their children's use of the Internet through the Library's connection and must sign an internet user agreement for children.
- Children six years of age and under must be in the immediate presence of a parent or other responsible caregiver over the age of 12.
- Public Access Computers located in the Children's Room are to be used by children under the age of sixteen. Anyone sixteen years of age and older may use these computers in the Children's Room only if accompanied by a child.

Privacy

While the Library cannot guarantee the privacy of data or computer usage of the public access computers, it considers such privacy to be extremely important. The Library follows best practices to secure the network and its computers and to ensure that search histories are erased between computer sessions. The Library does not retain computer reservation records beyond one day. It is also clearly stated in this policy that infringement upon the rights and privacy of others is unacceptable use of these resources.

Consequences

- Any damage to library technology may be charged to the user.
- Failure to use the equipment appropriately and responsibly may result in restriction or suspension of computer use privileges, determined on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Library. (All other Library policies also apply.)
- Illegal use may be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.
- Computer users will be informed in writing by the Library Director if their privileges have been restricted or suspended for more than one day due to violations of the Acceptable Use Policy.