

Internet Services Policy

Effective April 22, 2002

Use of electronic information and communication is a very rapidly developing area of public and private activity. The Manitowoc Public Library recognizes that these developments pose new challenges as well as opportunities for the Library Board, the Library staff, and Library users and their families. The Library believes that these challenges and opportunities are best addressed by adherence to the fundamental principles of traditional library use and the principles of a free society. Electronic methods of receiving information do not change the mission of the Manitowoc Public Library.

This policy partially updates and replaces the policy entitled "Internet Resources," adopted on December 16, 1996, by the Manitowoc Public Library Board of Trustees.

Acceptable Use of the Internet

Freedom to access information is a responsibility. The Internet enables the Library to provide resources not available within the confines of its own collection. It offers access to a wealth of material that is personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, but it also enables access to some materials that may be offensive and/or illegal.

Guidelines for acceptable use of Internet resources include the following:

- Using resources for educational, informational and recreational purposes only; and not for unauthorized, illegal or unethical purposes.
- Respecting the privacy of others by not misrepresenting oneself as another user; by not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others; by not seeking unauthorized access to any computer system, or damaging or altering software components of any network or database.
- Further respecting the privacy of others using public access workstations at the Manitowoc Public Library by not interfering with their use.
- Making only authorized copies of copyrighted or licensed software or data.
- Not sending, receiving, or displaying text or graphics that may reasonably be construed as obscene.
- Not sending, receiving, or displaying graphics that may reasonably be construed as harmful to minors, as defined by Federal and State statute.

Consequences for Unacceptable Use

Unacceptable use of the Library's Internet access will result in discipline ranging from verbal warning, through denial of computer privileges for the day, to denial of computer privileges for a week to several months, and finally to denial of right to use the Library for a specified time period, often a year. In the event of inappropriate use by a minor, the child's parent or guardian will be notified by the Library after the second offense.

Staff members observing unacceptable behavior shall take appropriate action. At their discretion, staff members shall also fill out an Incident Report of the behavior problem and forward it to the Business

Office. When a patron is banned from using the computers and/or from the Library for a time longer than one week, copies of the Incident Report(s) are forwarded to him or her (or in the case of a minor child, his or her parent or guardian) along with an explanation. When deemed appropriate by the Library Director, reports shall be forwarded to the Manitowoc Police Department or other appropriate law enforcement agency.

Children's Use of the Internet

The Library upholds and affirms the right and responsibility of parents to determine and monitor their children's use of all Library materials and resources, including the Internet. Library users, whether children or adults, are the final selectors in using the Internet and are responsible for their individual choices and decisions.

The Library makes information available to help parents and guardians in their efforts to exercise their rights and responsibilities regarding their own children's use of electronic resources. In addition to books and other materials on the subject, the Library provides programs that offer training on electronic resources. Training sessions may be requested by appointment and/or as scheduled public programs. Training is not available "on demand" because of time constraints and anticipated demand.

A parent or guardian may request that his or her minor child be denied the use of the Library's Bookable (Internet) computers. Once the restriction is negotiated with a member of the Library's Management Team and is submitted in writing, the Library will provide its best efforts to enforce the restriction requested. However, the Library cannot guarantee absolute compliance with the restriction by the child. The parent or guardian remains responsible for monitoring use of the Internet and other electronic resources at the Library.

COMPLIANCE WITH COPYRIGHT LAW

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