

BAY COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Internet Safety and Computer Use Policy

The Bay County Library System provides computers for public use in all of its branches. The Library makes this service available as part of its mission to provide free and open access to information of all types in a wide range of formats for patrons of all ages and backgrounds.

Choosing and Evaluating Sources: The Internet

The Internet is a global electronic network of ideas, images and commentary that may enhance resources already available in the Library. The Library cannot control, and is not responsible for, the content available on the Internet. Sources may provide information that is inaccurate, incomplete, or dated. Depending on the perspective of the user, many websites are potentially offensive or otherwise disturbing.

As with printed information, patrons are encouraged to evaluate the validity of information on the Internet. Members of Library staff are available to provide assistance and to help identify appropriate sites. The Library also offers classes on how to use the Internet.

Access by Minors

The Library upholds the rights of every individual to have access to constitutionally protected material. The Library also affirms the right and responsibility of parents and legal guardians to determine and monitor their own children's use of library materials and resources, including their children's use of Library computers to access the Internet. To assist parents in their responsibility for their children's use of the Internet, the Library provides the following services:

- Specially designed web pages for children and young adults with links to age appropriate Internet sites and to filtered search engines.
- Computers with commercial filtering software for public use in the children's area at each branch of the Bay County Library System. This filtering software will block many specific sites that may be offensive to some users, but may not block all materials that may be offensive to all users. Parents should inform their children of materials they do not want them to use, and may wish to supervise their children's Internet sessions.

Filtering

Most computers in the adult areas are filtered. Patrons who require use of an unfiltered computer should notify Library staff for assignment to a computer with unfiltered Internet access.

In accordance with Michigan Public Act 212, patrons may be required to show picture ID, with date-of-birth information. Minors under the age of 18 will use filtered computers unless under the direct supervision of their parent or legal guardian.

Rules Governing Use

All users are expected to respect the privacy of other users, including not attempting to censor or comment on what others are viewing. All users are subject to the Library's Rules of Conduct as well as pertinent state, federal and local laws.

Library computers and Wi-Fi may not be used for any illegal activity or to place any material on the Internet related to any illegal activity.

Users may not:

- Invade the privacy of others or engage in any activity that is harassing, defamatory, or threatening; or receive or display graphics which may reasonably be construed as obscene as defined by law.
- Use the Library's computers or personal laptops as a staging ground to gain unauthorized access to the Library's networks or computer systems or to any other network or computer system.
- Obstruct the work of others by consuming gratuitously large amounts of system resources or by deliberately crashing any Library computer system.
- Display images, sounds, or messages in a way that will negatively affect those who find them objectionable or offensive.
- Make any attempt to damage computer equipment or software.
- Make any attempt to alter software configurations in any manner, regardless of intent.
- Make any attempt to cause degradation of system performance.
- Engage in any activity that is deliberately and maliciously offensive, libelous or slanderous.
- Represent yourself as another person for purposes of fraud or other illegal activity.

The Bay County Library System reserves the right to terminate an Internet session at any time.

The Bay County Library System is not responsible for any damage, loss of data or liability that may occur through use of the Library's computers.

Computers are available on a first-come, first-served basis. In order to allow all patrons an opportunity to use the equipment, generally a time limit of one-hour per session is enforced when others are waiting to use a computer. Otherwise, users may ask to have the time of their session extended. Once time is extended, should all computers become occupied, the person who has been on the longest, or who has had the most sessions that day, may be asked to vacate within five minutes. Under special circumstances, the Library reserves the right to either reduce or extend the one-hour time limit.

The Bay County Library System utilizes computer management software for access to and time monitoring. A Bay County Library System library account in "good standing" is required to log onto public computers. A patron's library account is in good standing as long as their outstanding balance is less than \$5 and there are no outstanding fees for lost or damaged materials. Persons who do not own a library card may access the computers by requesting a guest pass. Library staff may require persons who request multiple guest passes to obtain a library card.

Refusal to comply with these rules may result in loss of library privileges or other disciplinary action, including being asked to leave the library and/or summoning of law enforcement authorities.

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