

Internet Use Policy

To fulfill its mission, the Waco-McLennan County Library provides access to a broad range of informational sources, including those available through the Internet.

As an informational resource, the Internet enables the library to provide information far beyond the limitations of its own collection. It is, however, an unregulated medium, and not all sources on the Internet will provide accurate, complete, or current information. Since the library cannot control or monitor the vast amount of material accessible from computers and networks via the Internet, the individual user must accept responsibility for determining and evaluating the content.

Children and the Internet

While the Internet holds great opportunities for educational exploration, parents and legal guardians should be aware that it is an unregulated medium. Some of the material found on the Internet may not be considered suitable for children.

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, P.L. 106-554, the Library computers are filtered to, "...block access to obscene and pornographic images and prevent minors from accessing materials harmful to them." However, no filtering software can control access to all materials that an individual may deem inappropriate. The Library does not guarantee the total effectiveness of technological protection measures such as filtering software.

As with the Library's materials collection, it is the right and responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to guide their children in the selection of Internet resources that are compatible with the values and the beliefs of their family. The library staff does not regulate the content of Internet sources accessed by any patron, regardless of age.

Use Guidelines

While library staff does not regulate what the public views on the Internet, the following laws will be enforced:

§21.16 of the **Texas Penal Code** prohibits the intentional disclosure of visual material, including on an Internet website, depicting another person with the person's intimate parts exposed or engaged in sexual conduct.

§43.22 of the **Texas Penal Code** prohibits the intentional or knowing display of an obscene photograph, drawing, or visual representation, while being reckless about whether a person is present who will be offended or alarmed by the display.

§43.24 of the **Texas Penal Code** prohibits the display of harmful material, defined in the law similarly to indecent material under federal law, if the displayer is reckless about whether a minor is present who will be offended or alarmed by the display.

Chapter 33 of the Texas Penal Code prohibits various crimes involving the use of computers.

Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited when using the Library's computers and Internet resources. Violation of any of these may lead to the suspension from using the Library's computers and Internet resources.

- Any illegal or criminal purpose, including, but not limited to activity covered by the Texas Computer Crime Statute V.T.C.A. § Penal Code 33 et seq
- Engaging in any activity which facilitates sending, receiving, or displaying inappropriate materials to a minor
- Modifying or gaining access to files, passwords or data belonging to others
- Seeking unauthorized access to any computer system
- Harassment of others
- Engaging in any activity that is deliberately and maliciously offensive, libelous or slanderous
- Engaging in any activity which facilitates sending, receiving, or displaying inappropriate materials to a minor
- Destroying or damaging equipment, software, or data belonging to the Library or other users
- Violation of copyright laws or software licensing agreements
- Misuse or abuse directed toward library staff, patrons, materials, or equipment
- Conducting a business from Library computers

Responsibility and Authority

The Library Director is given the authority to establish procedures for the use of computers and Internet resources. These procedures will ensure equitable access to computers and Internet resources and will include penalties for the violation of the Library's Internet policy or procedures.

The Library reserves the right to terminate an Internet session at any time. Failure to comply with this policy or misuse of the Library's networks or computers may result in the loss of computer access privileges, potential loss of library privileges and possible criminal prosecution.

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