Category: Public Service
Policy Number: 4-8
Policy Name: Internet and Computer Use

Purpose:

In keeping with Waterloo Public Library's purpose to fulfill the multiple literacy needs of our community, the Library provides public access to Internet at all of its locations. Equitable access to public Internet is responsive to public needs and provides the ability for all members of the community to benefit from the transformational opportunities of basic technology and the engagement and learning experiences afforded by it.

Introduction:

The Internet provides access to a wealth of information, entertainment and lifelong learning as well as tools for sharing ideas and data in a worldwide forum. However, not all sources provide accurate, age appropriate, current, or legal information that is philosophically acceptable to everyone, and some content may be sexually explicit, controversial or offensive. As an unregulated online environment the Internet presents challenges that range from, on the one hand, the practical difficulty of accessing relevant and reliable content out of the overwhelming quantity of information available to, on the other hand, illegal activity that can cause harm.

Policy:

Waterloo Public Library collaborates with customers to provide safe, effective and equitable access to Internet in a learning environment that is comfortable for everyone. In the interest of good public service, the Library trains staff to assist customers with navigating the Internet and accessing information. The Library also provides customers with one-on-one technology help and training, including help with Internet searching.

The Library has no control over the Internet and assumes no responsibility for content of sites on the Internet. Customers must evaluate the reliability and validity of information accessed. The Library's website includes staff recommended links to other websites that meet the guidelines of the *Collection Development Policy*.

Children and young adults have access to all materials in the Library, including the Internet. As with other library materials responsibility for monitoring a child's access to Internet and other electronic products rests with parents and guardians. The Library does not act in the place of or the absence of a parent or guardian and is not responsible for enforcing any limitations which a parent or guardian may place on a child's use of the Internet.

The Library assumes no responsibility for the security of on-line transactions and cannot guarantee privacy on the Internet. Messages and information about a user's activities may be subject to unauthorized interception by third parties.

Library Responsibilities:

The Library and its staff will:

- Make customers aware of the *Internet and Computer Use Policy* through signs and brochures and on the Library website
- Use reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the *Internet and Computer Use Policy* and guidelines
- Offer a mix of filtered and unfiltered Internet workstations
- Update commercial filtering software regularly. However, customers should be aware that no filtering product is able to block all offensive sites
- Take measures to protect the privacy of customers by the use of privacy screens on selected workstations
- Offer assistance to customers when time and knowledge permits. Library staff may not be familiar with all software available for use. Customers are encouraged to consult the many other resources in the Library for help

Customer Responsibilities:

All customers are expected to use the resources in a responsible manner and to comply with these guidelines:

- Workstations are in public areas shared by people of all ages and sensibilities. Each user is ultimately responsible for the selection of sites and should be aware that other users may be involuntarily exposed to what is displayed. Staff are authorized to ask customers to stop using the Internet if their use is disturbing others
- At registration, the parent or guardian of a child 12 years of age and under must sign a statement accepting responsibility for the child's Internet and computer use
- Parents or guardians are responsible for monitoring their children's Internet activity and choice of workstations. Filtering software does not replace the need for parental

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guidance
- Customers must respect the time limits posted on the workstations
- All customers are expected to respect the privacy of others using the Library computers

Limitations & Disclosures:

The Library's wireless network is not secure; we cannot guarantee the safety of your traffic across the wireless network:
- The Library does not assume any responsibility for the configurations, security, or files on a customer's laptop resulting from connection to the Library's network
- Information sent to or from customer laptops can be captured by anyone else with a wireless device and appropriate software. The Library is not responsible for any information that is compromised
- Library staff are not able to provide in-depth technical assistance to customers, and there is no guarantee that a wireless connection can always be made. At times it may be necessary for customers to consult the manufacturer of the software or laptop
- Waterloo Public Library is not responsible for any changes made to a customer's computer settings
- Customers must click the I AGREE button from the *Internet and Computer Access Policy* before connecting to the Waterloo Public Library's wireless network and Library website

Prohibited Activities include the Following:

- Use of workstations for illegal or criminal purposes or to seek access to unauthorized areas
- Infringement of copyright and other intellectual property rights; the Library assumes no responsibility for such infringements
- Subverting, or attempting to subvert, any security devices in either software or hardware format
- Attempting to install viruses or other programs designed to damage or alter software
- Damaging or altering equipment, software or configurations
- Sending unsolicited commercial material or "spamming"
- Misrepresenting oneself as another person
- Attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords or data belonging to others
- Any activity, which interferes with or disrupts computer access, is prohibited
- Vandalism or theft of Library property

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Consequences of Violating Computer Use Guidelines:

The customer will be informed of how the Library's *Internet and Computer Use Policy* rules were violated. Depending on the severity of the misuse, the consequences of violating the Policy may include one or all of the following:

- Staff may give a verbal warning
- Computer privileges may be revoked for a period of time
- The customer may be expelled from the Library for a period of time

Customers using the Library's computers for illegal activities will be subject to prosecution.

Document Record:

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