Internet and Computer Use Policy

INTRODUCTION

This is a library-wide policy for the management of computer data networks and the resources they make available, as well as stand-alone computers that are owned and administered by the Monroe County Public Library (MCPL). The policy reflects the principles of MCPL. It specifies the Library's objectives in providing computing resources for public use, and the responsibilities assumed by the users of such resources.

In accord with Indiana Code (IC 36-12-1-12), MCPL performs a public review of this Internet and Computer Use Policy annually.

OBJECTIVES

MCPL provides computers which allow public access to a variety of electronic resources, including in-house databases (the library catalog, magazine indexes, and business directories), productivity software (word processors, spreadsheets, etc.), and the Internet (primarily through Web browsers). While MCPL does not provide email accounts, patrons may send and receive email if they have an account accessible through the World Wide Web.

In keeping with our general policies, MCPL protects patrons' rights to privacy and confidentiality. MCPL keeps any communications that reside on its computer network confidential. However, in general, electronic communication is not secure and networks are sometimes susceptible to outside intervention. As part of normal system maintenance, network administrators do monitor system activity, but the library does not reveal information about an individual's use of computer resources unless compelled to do so by a court order.

To promote equitable access to computer resources, MCPL utilizes time management software. To access the Internet, an individual must use his or her own library card number or guest pass number. Staff may also take other measures to manage Internet time including (but not restricted to) reserving terminals for individuals or groups with specific needs.

USER RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure fair and proper use of library computing resources, users must follow the legal and cooperative rules listed below.

Legal Responsibilities:

Computing resources may only be used for legal purposes. Examples of illegal use include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Attempting to alter or damage computer equipment, software configurations, or files belonging to MCPL, other users, or external networks
- Attempting unauthorized entry to MCPL's network or external networks
- Intentional propagation of computer viruses, trojans, etc.
- Violation of copyright or communications laws
- Violation of software license agreements
- Transmission of speech not protected by the First Amendment, such as libel and obscenity

Cooperative Responsibilities:

MCPL strives to balance the rights of users to access different information resources with the rights of users to work in a public environment free from harassing sounds and visuals. We ask all our library users to remain sensitive to the fact that they are working in a public environment

shared by people of all ages, with a variety of information interests and needs. In order to ensure an efficient, productive computing environment, the Library insists on the practice of cooperative computing. This includes:

- Respecting the privacy of other users
- Not using computer accounts, access codes, or network identification codes assigned to others
- Refraining from overuse of connect time, information storage space, printing facilities, processing capacities, or bandwidth capacities
- Refraining from the use of sounds and visuals which might disrupt the ability of other library patrons to use the library and its resources

SANCTIONS

MCPL relies on the cooperation of its users in order to efficiently and effectively provide shared resources and ensure community access to a wide range of information. If individuals break these acceptable use rules in any way, their right to use networked resources may be suspended for a specified time, depending on the damage caused by their actions. They will be notified of the length of and reason for the suspension. Individuals using library computing resources for illegal purposes may also be subject to prosecution.

COMPUTER USE AT MCPL INCLUDES PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE INTERNET

MCPL aims to develop collections, resources, and services that meet the cultural, educational, informational and recreational needs of its diverse community, and which respond to advances in technology. With this goal in mind, and as part of its mission to meet the changing needs of the community, MCPL offers access to the Internet.

A global network of computers, the Internet provides access to a wide variety of educational, recreational and reference resources, many of which are not available in print, but there is no central control over its content or users. The Internet contains a diverse range of information, some of which may be objectionable or offensive. MCPL cannot protect users from offensive Internet content, but librarians can offer advice and suggestions to help ensure effective Internet searching.

MCPL has investigated filters designed to restrict access to various online content, but has found them to be both overly broad (restricting access to materials that no one would find objectionable) and not fully effective (allowing access to a considerable number of sites of the sort they purport to block). Given these limitations, MCPL has not installed such software. In order to provide alternatives for minors, MCPL does provide links through the Children's site to search engines with filters.

DISCLAIMERS

Except for the Web pages produced by the Library, MCPL does not control Internet content and makes no general effort to limit Internet access. However, when informed of a violation of MCPL's Internet and Computer Use Policy, library staff will enforce the legal and cooperative responsibilities outlined above.

As with other materials, parents and guardians of minor children--not the library nor its staff--are responsible for supervising their children's use of Internet resources at the library.

MCPL cannot ensure the availability nor the accuracy of external electronic resources. Like print materials, not all electronic sources provide accurate, complete or current information. Users need to be good information consumers, questioning the validity of information.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

MCPL assumes no liability for any loss or damage to users' data or devices, nor for any personal damage or injury incurred as a result of using MCPL's computing resources. This includes damage or injury sustained from invasions of the user's privacy.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees [1] of the Monroe County Public Library on March 5, 1997, amended June 21,2001; June 20, 2002; and July 17, 2003; reaffirmed June 16, 2004; revised June 15, 2005; reaffirmed June 20, 2007; June 17, 2009, September 15, 2010; September 19, 2012 and January 21, 2015.

Updated June 02, 2015

- [2]
- [3]
- [4]

Links:
[1] http://mcpl.info/library-trustees/board-trustees
[2] http://mcpl.info/print/printpdf/geninfo/internet-and-computer-use-policy
[3] http://mcpl.info/printmail/printpdf/geninfo/internet-and-computer-use-policy
[4] http://mcpl.info/printpdf/printpdf/geninfo/internet-and-computer-use-policy