ALCONA COUNTY LIBRARY

OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Computer Use and Internet Policy

Computer Use Policy:

Philosophy
This Computer Use Policy is designed to provide all members of the public with fair, equitable access to computer services at all locations.

Practical matters
Sign-up – Patrons may sign up for any available computer either at the computer, at the circulation desk or on the computer sign-in sheet, depending on the branch. If all computers are busy, patrons may reserve the next available computer at the circulation desk.   Desktop computers are available to all patrons; at Harrisville and Lincoln, wireless laptops, which have reduced filtering, are available to adults (ages 18 or older) at the circulation desk. If a patron does not have a Library Card, a driver's license or other identification or object of value will be held at the circulation desk until the return of the laptop.

Library cards – A current, unexpired library card is required to sign up for or use a computer (exception below). Patrons using another person's library card (with or without permission) will have their library access suspended. In order to protect the owner's rights, cards used by persons other than the owner will be invalid until the owner is able to show identification. A temporary computer pass is available to visitors at the circulation desk at Harrisville.

Time limits – The Harrisville branch uses software as a means to count the # of users and to limit the time allowed for individual use each day. At the other branches, a computer sign-up sheet is used to track the length of computer time that an individual uses. The time limits are set at the Director's discretion or the designee to allow access to the greatest number of library users .

Special-use computers – Some computers are designated for specific purposes such as catalog search or children's software. In Harrisville and in Lincoln one computer with a large screen is designated for use by people with visual impairment.

Headphones – Library-owned or personal headphones are permitted, but the volume must be kept low enough not to disturb others.

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Multiple Users – No more than two people may share a computer. Staff members, at their discretion, may approve or disapprove requests for more users.

Printing –The printing charge is 20 cents per B&W page, 50 cents per color page. Patrons are responsible for determining the number of pages in the file before printing. Patrons will be charged for all pages printed whether they take them or not.

Saving Files and Documents – Patrons who wish a permanent record of their work need to save files and documents on their own portable media. Library computers do not allow users to permanently save documents or personal files to the hard drive.

Staff Assistance

> Library staff will assist individual users on how to access the Internet or library-owned software, and explain basic navigational or software commands.
> Lengthy one-on-one tutorials or staff assistance for specific searches or the creation of documents are not possible Users who need training should attend the Library's Tech Tuesday sessions or use the Online Tutorial programs on the library webpage.
> Library personnel do not monitor or supervise children's use of the Internet or library-owned software.

Illegal and Unacceptable Uses – Patrons may use library computers only for legal uses. Examples of unacceptable uses include but are not limited to the following:
> a. Attempting to crash, degrade performance or gain unauthorized access to computer systems and networks.
> b. Damaging equipment, software or data belonging to the Library or other users.
> c. Using the Internet for malicious purposes, such as intentionally propagating a virus.
> d. Sending unsolicited advertising.
> e. Operating a business.
> f. Attempting to gain or gaining access to another person's files or authorization codes.

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g. Using another person's identification with or without permission.
h. Using, disclosing or disseminating personal identification information regarding minors without parental permission.
i. Displaying obscene material, pornography or sexual content that might be harmful to minors.
j. Harassing other users with messages, prints or images.
k. Libeling, slandering or maliciously offending other users.
l. Violating copyright laws or software licensing agreements.
m. Violating federal, state or local laws, regulations or ordinances, including gambling and other illegal activities.

Closing – Computers and printers shut down 15 minutes before the library closes.

Library Use – Library staff may reserve computers for classes, proctoring, staff training or special programs.

Exceptions – Staff members may make exceptions to this policy for unusual circumstances.

Disclaimer – The Alcona County Library does not guarantee that its computer systems will meet the specific needs of any or every user, or be error-free or without interruption. The Library will not be liable for any direct or indirect, incidental or consequential damages (including lost data or profits) sustained or incurred in connection with the use, operation or inability to use its system. Loss of time, work or property due to equipment malfunctions shall not be the responsibility of the library. Patrons use library computer hardware and software at their own risk. The Library is not responsible for equipment malfunction, loss of data, any damages to the user's disks, data or electronic transactions of any type. The Library is not responsible for the loss of any portable media.

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Internet Access Policy:

Philosophy

In keeping with the library's mission, the Alcona County Library makes the Internet available to the public in all of its branches as an intellectual, educational and cultural resource.

Internet Content

The Internet, as an information resource, enables libraries to provide information beyond the confines of their own collections. It allows access to ideas, information, and commentary from around the globe.

Currently, however, the Internet is an unregulated medium. As such, while it offers access to a wealth of material that is personally, professionally and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, it also enables access to material that is out of date, inaccurate or offensive.

The Alcona County Library is not responsible for the content of information accessed or selected. The Library strives to maintain a computing environment that promotes access to a wide variety of electronic information in an array of formats; however, the Library makes no guarantee that all Internet content and services will function on its equipment. The library may limit access to Internet functions that it determines to be inconsistent with its mission and goals or to consume more resources than the benefit derived in support of its mission and goals.

Content filtering

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) (47 USC § 254 and 20 USC § 9134) and the June 23, 2003, United States Supreme Court decision relating thereto, as well as provisions in the Michigan Library Privacy Act (MCL 397.606) (Michigan PA 212) regarding restriction of Internet access to minors, require that all Internet-accessible computers at the Library be restricted from showing graphic images that are obscene, contain child pornography or, in the case of users under 18 years of age, are harmful to minors. Internet access at all branches of the Alcona County Library is restricted through the use of filtering software.

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Important: Internet content filters are not infallible. They may allow access to sites displaying obscene material, and they may block innocent sites.

If patrons discover what they regard as an inappropriate site, they are asked to notify staff. If patrons feel that a particular site is inappropriately blocked, they are asked to fill out an unblock request.

In either case, library staff will, within reasonable time and workload limits, examine the site in question and determine whether it should be blocked or be unblocked, according to the standards set forth by CIPA and the Michigan Library Privacy Act.

Obscenity, child pornography and material harmful to minors are all defined and governed by applicable statutes, regulations, ordinances and case law.

The library uses the requirements of CIPA and the Michigan law to determine what the filter should block. For wireless access by adults, the library uses the least restrictive blocking categories provided by the filter vendor that by their definitions appear to include prohibited content.

Parental guidance

Desktop, wired computers available to minors are filtered to block not only obscenity, pornography and material harmful to minors, but also a number of other categories such as social networks, malware, viruses, adware, extreme violence, etc. The library will not knowingly give a wireless computer filtered for an adult to a minor, but a minor bringing his or her own Internet-accessible device to the library will be able to access the Internet in the same way that an adult could on library-owned computers.

Parents and guardians need to be aware that even the filter for minors is not and cannot be totally effective and that the library cannot ensure that a minor will not purposefully or inadvertently access inappropriate materials. Although the library blocks access to non-moderated chat web sites, it does not filter the content of email, chat rooms or other forms of direct electronic communication and therefore cannot assure the safety and security of minors using these functions. The library also cannot protect against minors' unauthorized access to computer resources, including hacking and other unlawful online activities,

nor can it protect against unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors if the minors provide it while using the Internet.

Parents need to be actively interested in and responsible for supervision of minors' use of the Internet and other electronic resources. Parents are encouraged to discuss the use of the Internet and family values with their minors.

It is the library's intent not to block sites, either for adults or for minors that address sexuality and the human body in an educational, historical or medical context.

Compliance – Failure to comply with this policy or with library staff directions may result in restriction or termination of the user's computer use privileges and may result in prosecution under local, state or federal laws. Any person denied access to the Library or its services may appeal the denial to the Library Director. If the appeal is not resolved by the Director, it may be submitted in writing to the Library Board. The Library Board will provide the person with an opportunity to be heard in person or in writing before deciding the appeal.

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