

# Computer and Internet Use Policy

## A. PURPOSE

To establish procedures and guidelines concerning the use of the Library District's computers which provide access to the Internet in order to fulfill the Library District's mission to provide access and services so residents experience an improved quality of life.

## B. ELIGIBILITY

The Maricopa County Library District provides limited access to the Internet. This service is available without charge to residents of Maricopa County. Non-residents may access Library District computers by purchasing a non-resident library card or a computer access card.

## C. POLICY

The internet is a global electronic network of information. There are no local, state, or federal laws, which control content of the Internet. However, Arizona law requires all public libraries who provide Internet access to filter out material which is harmful to minors. A.R.S. §34-502. Further, federal law prevents public libraries from receiving certain funding unless the library filters out obscenity, child pornography, and materials harmful to minors. Children's Internet Protection Act, PL 106-554. The Maricopa County Library District is in compliance with these laws.

No filtering or monitoring program is completely effective, and while the Internet generally provides access to information that is valuable and enlightening, the user may find some material controversial, offensive, disturbing, erroneous, or illegal. In providing Internet access, the Maricopa County Library District does not warrant that the information is accurate or complete. Nor does the Library District endorse or ratify any information on the Internet. The Library District cannot guarantee that any personal information, including credit card information, will be delivered securely when accessing the Internet on a Library District computer.

The Library District is not, and does not intend to be, a full-service Internet provider. The District does not provide e-mail accounts, but does encourage the use of free public e-mail services. The Library District does not allow use of FTP (file transfer protocol) and does not support access to BBS or Usenet (newsgroups). The Library District Internet home page provides links to selected sites, which the District believes, contain current, accurate, and appropriate information. These sites are selected in accordance with the District's Collection Management Guidelines. The Library District home page allows access to library user's account information with a library card number and password. Arizona law requires the Library District to protect the confidentiality of library user's borrowing and use records. A.R.S. §41-1354.

As time permits, the Library staff will assist users in access its electronic information resources. Library District staff will also monitor the use of the District's electronic resources,. Staff reserves the right to interrupt activity or block access to sites that interfere with the performance of the District's computer system or violate this Policy.

Use of Library District equipment and the Internet to engage in any activity which constitutes violation of local, state, and/or federal laws is strictly prohibited. Responsibility for the consequence of copyright infringement lies with the library user. The Library District expressly disclaims liability or responsibility resulting from copyright infringement by users. Library District equipment and the Internet should be used in accordance with these guidelines. Failure to use the Library District's equipment and Internet access appropriately and responsibly may result in revocation of Library District use privileges, and my also have legal consequences.

#### **D. MINORS**

Access to the Internet is available to all library users, including minors. Minors who violate Library District policy or use the Internet for illegal or inappropriate purposes may lose their Library District privileges and experience legal consequences, just as adult users. Although the Library District attempts to filter out all material that could be considered obscenity, child pornography or harmful to minors, no filter is completely effective. Therefore, parents may choose to monitor their children's use of Library District computers. As is the case with access to other materials in the Library District's collection, any restriction of a minor's access to, or use of the Internet, shall be the responsibility of the minor's parent or legal guardian, not the Library District. Parents or legal guardians are encouraged to read the safety guidelines for children and teens online, available from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children ([www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)).

#### **E. USE BEHAVIORS**

- Users of electronic resources will respect the needs of other library users to do research in calm surroundings without interference from others
- Upon finishing a search, users are responsible for disconnecting from remote sites and closing the Internet browser. Children accompanying users of computer stations are to be supervised and monitored to prevent them from playing with the equipment or otherwise causing damage.
- Users of Library District computer stations may not harass, talk, libel or slander other users.
- Destruction of, damage to, or unauthorized modification of equipment, software, or data belonging to the Library or other users, a violation of Arizona law (A.R.S. §13-2316), is not allowed
- Unauthorized or illegal copying of copyright-protected material, a violation of U.S. law (U.S. Code, Title 17), and the violation of software license agreements is not allowed.
- Library users shall not attempt to upload, download, install, set up, run or execute any program or software not authorized by the Library on any of the Library's computer workstations.
- Unauthorized use of computer accounts, access codes, or network identification numbers assigned to others is not allowed

- Use of electronic communications facilities in ways that unnecessarily impede the activities of others (such as randomly initiating interactive electronic communications or chat exchanges, overuse of interactive network utilities, etc.) is not allowed.
- Violation of Arizona law (A.R.S. §13-3507) by using the Library's electronic systems to display explicit sexual material is not allowed.
- To ensure a safe and clean environment for all library customers:
  - Food and non-alcoholic drinks are welcome in all of our libraries.
  - Public computer stations are food-free areas.
  - Drinks are allowed at computer stations.
  - Food may be consumed in other library areas.
  - Customers are responsible for cleaning up when they finish eating.

## F. PROCEDURES

1. Library users shall have daily access to the District's computers on a first-come, first-serve basis or may make future reservations at the library's sign-up station.
2. Library users shall limit their use of the computers. Libraries, based on computer availability and customer demand, may limit customer use of computers with Internet access to 30-minutes or 60-minutes per day while others are waiting.
3. In times of heavy use, the Library District staff can enforce further limitations on the use of the computers to allow for equitable use.
4. All of the computer workstations are connected to printers. Printing incurs a fee, which is set by the Library District and is subject to change. We no longer use library cards with chips. A replacement card is free.

## G. DEFINITIONS

BBS (Bulletin Board Systems): Systems that post messages, electronic mail, computer programs, graphic files, etc. for use by subscribers.

Copyright: Text, graphics and other materials for which copyright registration has been made. The copyright holder has many rights under law and copyrighted materials may not be altered, or resold without permission of the owner. Limited copying is allowed under the Fair Use Doctrine.

E-Mail Accounts: A personal mailbox that allows the user to send and receive electronic mail.

Filter: An Internet Filter is typically defined as a software tool that is designed to block what may be considered inappropriate Internet use. These software tools typically employ URL (uniform resource locator) lists or word matching to achieve blocking of sites, which may be considered inappropriate. Both methods of such filtering and combinations of such software tools are widely available for home,

corporate and educational use. At the heart of URL lists are allowed-site lists and blocked-site lists and this is the type of software filter being deployed by Maricopa County IT and the Library District.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol): Ability to transfer a computer file from a remote computer site to your local computer.

Full-Service Internet Provider: A company that provides users telecommunication access to the Internet. Typically the company will also offer e-mail accounts, computer storage space, and related services. These companies can be found in the Yellow Pages under the heading "Internet Products & Services."

Internet: The collection of telecommunications networks that links computer systems worldwide. These networks are not under a single control but independently managed and adhere to recognized international communications protocols.

Internet Explorer: This program is created and distributed by Microsoft Incorporated for use in navigating the Internet.

Sites: A location that houses a computer that is accessible via the Internet. The computer has a public Internet address. The site may be located within the Library District's network or anywhere in the world.

Usenet: A national network of subject-based discussion and news groups. Subscribers can read and post messages to subject-specific lists.