

INTERNET SAFETY POLICY

General

The Durham Public Library provides its patrons with access to the Internet as part of its ongoing commitment to make information available through a variety of formats and from a variety of sources. The Internet, as an information resource, enables the library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection.

The Internet offers access to a wealth of information that can be personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages. However, the Internet is neither regulated nor controlled by any governing body. The Library makes no guarantees, either expressed or implied, with respect to the quality, accuracy, or content of the information available on the Internet. The provision of access does not mean or imply that the Library endorses or sanctions the content or point of view of any of the information or commentary which may be found on the Internet. Users are encouraged to be good information consumers by evaluating the validity of information accessed via the Internet.

Patron Responsibilities

All users of the Internet are expected to behave in a responsible and courteous manner and to follow all Internet rules, guidelines and regulations established for its use. Any use of the Library's Internet connection for illegal, inappropriate or obscene purposes or in support of such activities is prohibited. Users must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, including copyright and licensing agreements. Any individual who engages in illegal activity will be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities and may be permanently barred from using the Library's computer network.

In addition:

- Users must sign in to use the next available computer.
- All use of computers is done on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Each session will be limited to 30 minutes if there are others waiting to use the computer.
- No more than two people are permitted at a workstation at a time.
- The availability of staff to help with basic computer skills or Internet searching may be limited.
- Users may not change the settings and configurations of the computers.
- The Library reserves the right to terminate an Internet session at any time for inappropriate use.
- Users must sign off at the end of each session.
- Internet users who release personal information do so at their own risk. Anything accessed or entered on the library's computers is not secure and may be accessible to others.

Security

Users are cautioned that, because security in an electronic environment such as the Internet cannot be guaranteed, all transactions, files, and communications are vulnerable to unauthorized access and use and, therefore, should be considered public. The Library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from its connections to the Internet.

Children and the Internet

As with all other library materials, it is the responsibility of parents or guardians to monitor their children's computer usage at the Library. The Library will not restrict children's access to computers. Parents are encouraged to discuss the use of the Internet with their children and to set rules for their children including telling them never to give out identifying information, such as name, home address, and school, e-mail or telephone number or to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer user without the permission of a parent or guardian. This discussion is especially important with the popularity and availability of online social networks.

Filtering

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Library filters all its computers, and all access to the Internet through its network, to protect against access to obscene visual depictions, child pornography, and/or other material harmful to minors, as required by law.

The filter may unintentionally block sites that have legitimate research value and fail to block objectionable content. Users should be aware that Internet filtering software installed for CIPA compliance should not substitute for individual judgment and/or parental involvement and oversight.

As the law requires, the Library will disable filtered Internet access to persons 18 or older who request it for bona fide research or any other lawful purposes.

Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Education, Supervision and Monitoring

Library staff will educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy.

Wireless

The Library offers wireless “Wi-Fi” access to the library’s Internet service for properly equipped laptops and handheld devices. The Durham Library is not responsible for the safety of equipment, data files, device configurations, or security resulting from connection to the library’s wireless network or to the Internet. Nor is the Library liable for any damages to hardware, software, or data, however caused.

Guidelines for wireless users:

- Library staff is not able to provide technical assistance, nor does the library provide a guarantee that a wireless connection will be made.
- Patrons may print to the library printer from their personal devices using the mobile printing service.
- Sound is not permitted in the library. If audio files are accessed, the use of headphones is required. Patrons must supply their own headphones.
- The wireless network has capacity limitations on the number of users who may be online simultaneously, so access may be limited at times.

Social Media

Social media is defined as any web application, site or account created and maintained by the Durham Public Library which facilitates an environment for library staff and library patrons to share opinions and information about library related subjects/issues. The Library recognizes and respects differences in opinion. Appropriate comments, posts and messages are welcome and will be reviewed. The decision to evaluate and publish comments is solely that of the Library director or her/his designee.

The Durham Public Library considers use of its public access computers and wireless network to constitute acceptance of its policies, guidelines and regulations and reserves the right to take appropriate action to insure compliance. Any violation of the policies, guidelines and regulations will result in suspension or loss of privilege to use the Library’s computers or wireless access.