Computer and Internet Use Policy

Blackwater Regional Library provides access to the Internet and other electronic resources to further our mission of satisfying the evolving informational and recreational needs of the region we serve. In compliance with the provisions of the Children's Internet Protection Act, all computers are filtered. Internet access is free and provided equally to all library users. A group of patrons sharing one terminal, if unfiltered, must all be eligible for unfiltered access. Upon request of an adult patron (age 18 or older), staff will make efforts to provide access to a blocked webpage.

Filtered wireless access is available to users at Blackwater Regional Library. Library staff is unable to disable the filter on patron's personal electronic devices. Wireless users agree to abide by the library's Computer and Internet Use Policy. Blackwater Regional Library is not responsible for any harm, loss of data, or loss of device/laptop that might result from using the library's wireless access connection.

User Responsibilities

- *__Choosing Sources__*. In offering Internet access, the Blackwater Regional Library cannot guarantee that information found through the Internet is accurate, authoritative, or factual.

  The library cannot control and is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information gathered over the Internet. Be aware that the Internet is unregulated and materials accessible through it may be outdated, biased, inappropriate, or offensive. The Internet and its available resources may contain material of a controversial nature. Library users access the Internet at their own discretion and are responsible for any access points they reach.

  Since the library has limited control over content, individuals use the Internet at their own risk. Users are advised to use caution when sending personal information such as name, address, social security number, credit card number, etc., over the Internet.

- *__Children's Use of the Internet__* - Children under the age of 10 must be supervised by a parent or other responsible adult when using the Internet. The parent may choose to leave the child's side but must remain within the library building while the child is on the Internet. However, parents should be aware that children who use the Internet without close guidance may be exposed to inappropriate information and images, even with filters. Parents are strongly encouraged to avoid this risk by monitoring their children's use of the Internet. The library does filter its computers, but parents or guardians are ultimately responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Any restriction of a child's access to the Internet is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

- *__Courtesy to Others__*. Individuals are expected to use the Internet in a courteous, reasonable, and responsible manner. Please be mindful that the Library is a public place; use discretion in displaying text or graphics that may be offensive to others.

- *__Time limit__*. When other patrons are waiting, computers may only be used for 30 minutes.

- *__Staff Assistance__*. Library staff cannot provide in-depth training on Internet operations or personal computer skills. Staff may, however, be able to offer searching suggestions and answer questions.

- ***Downloading and Printing.*** Downloaded files must be saved to an external source, not on the computer's hard drive. External storage media may be purchased at the circulation desk. Downloaded software, files, etc. may contain viruses. The Library is not responsible for damage to a user's storage device, computer, or any loss of data.

  The library charges for external storage media and printing/photocopying on library equipment. See the General Library Fees chart available in the branch and on the website for a listing of the charges.

Restrictions

Patrons are expected to use the Internet in a responsible manner. Unauthorized use of the library computers may result in the loss of Internet privileges.

Restrictions include the following:

- Use of library computers is prohibited for any purpose which may cause damage to equipment or the network ***or*** that which is in violation of existing federal and state laws.

  Computer users are bound by local, state, and federal laws relating to copyright, security, obscenity, materials harmful to juveniles and other laws regarding electronic media.

  > **Definition of obscenity:**
  > The Supreme Court of the United States defines **obscenity** according to a three-prong test:
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  > 1. A thing must be prurient in nature.
  > 2. A thing must be completely devoid of scientific, political, educational, or social value.
  > 3. A thing must violate the local community standards.
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  > If something satisfies all three conditions, it meets the legal definition of obscenity.

  Specifically, the Code of Virginia prohibits the use of library computers to:

  - access child pornography (Va. Code section 18.2-374.1:1),
  - communicate threats (Va. Code section 18.2-60),
  - inappropriately display material harmful to juveniles (Va. Code section 18.2-391),
  - produce, publish, sell or possess obscene items (Va. Code section 18.2-374, 18.2-374.1),
  - facilitate certain offenses involving children (Va. Code section 18.2-374.3).

  Federal law requires enforcement of a policy that protects against all access to obscenity and child pornography and that protects against access by minors to materials harmful to them [47 U.S.C. sections 254(h)(6)(B)(i) and (C)(i)]. Violations of law will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

  The library reserves the right to limit or revoke library privileges, including computer privileges and access to its computer resources. Misuse or unauthorized use of library computers and information resources may result in revocation of library privileges. If such action is taken, the customer will be informed by letter from the Library Director.

- Safety requires that minors not provide personal information to unknown individuals on the Internet.

- Unauthorized copying of copyright protected or licensed materials is not permitted.

- To help us keep the equipment working properly and in courtesy to others, tampering with or altering the library's software or hardware is not permitted. Failure to comply may result in legal action.

The library reserves the right to take appropriate action to ensure compliance with this policy.