

INTERNET ACCESS POLICY

ACCESS TO INTERNET RESOURCES

To fulfill its mission of meeting the informational, recreational, and lifelong learning needs of ALL citizens on a timely basis, the Williamsburg County Library (WCL) provides access to an extensive range of information resources, including those available through the Internet. The Library has established this policy to ensure responsible and appropriate use of the Internet within all the facilities of the county library system.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF USERS

The Internet enables access to a wealth of valuable and reliable information from a variety of sources. However, it also provides access to information that may be inaccurate, controversial, illegal, personally offensive to the viewer, or inappropriate for children. Individual users must exercise judgement in evaluating the validity and appropriateness of information retrieved via the Internet and must assume personal responsibility for their use. WCL cannot be held liable for the content of any Internet site.

While WCL upholds users' rights to privacy and confidentiality in their use of all library resources, the nature of electronic resources makes it impossible to guarantee these rights. Since some Internet sites may be inappropriate for viewing in a public setting, users should exercise discretion in consideration of the rights of others.

WCL employs filtering software on all computers used by students, patrons and staff. It is a violation of library policy for any person to instruct or demonstrate how to bypass the filtering software.

CHILDREN'S USE

The Internet provides access to a valuable educational and informational resources for children and youth, who are expected to abide by this policy. As with other library resources, WCL affirms the responsibility of parents to determine the appropriateness of Internet resources for their children. **Parents are strongly encouraged to supervise their children's Internet use, as Library staff cannot assume this responsibility.** Parents should be aware that no filtering software currently available is a perfect shield from inappropriate material. Parental supervision is still the best protection for children.

CONDITIONS AND TERMS OF INTERNET USE AT THE LIBRARY

In an effort to ensure that the use of the Internet is consistent with the mission of WCL, the following regulations shall apply:

1. Internet workstation users must behave in accordance with the Library's rules of conduct.
2. The Library may establish sign-up procedures and time limits for use of the Internet workstations. Children under fifteen must have their library card in hand to use a public access computer.
3. Library staff will assist Internet users in a manner consistent with other Library services. The availability of staff and needs of other Library users will necessarily affect the extent of assistance in Internet use.
4. Users may print according to procedures. The per page charge is the same as for photocopies.
5. **Users may not:**
 - a. Damage or attempt to damage equipment; alter or attempt to alter software configurations.
 - b. Attempt to gain unauthorized access to or cause disruption of the Library's computer system.
 - c. Violate copyright laws or software licensing agreements.
 - d. Display or send obscene (as defined by S.C. Code 16-15-305) images, messages or files.
 - e. Violate state, federal, or local laws or regulations.
 - f. Use their own software or download or install software on the Internet workstations.
 - g. Post messages to chat rooms, news groups, bulletin boards or discussion groups from the Library's workstations.
 - h. Play games on any Internet workstation.

PENALTIES FOR POLICY VIOLATIONS

Failure to use the Internet workstations appropriately and responsibly, as defined in this policy, will result in the loss of Internet use privileges and/or other Library privileges. Unlawful acts are subject to prosecution by local, state and federal authorities.

This policy has been approved by the Williamsburg County Library Board, July 24, 1997, and is subject to Board revision.

Revisions approved by WCL Board September 18, 2001 and November 17, 2003