

Internet Safety Policy Guidelines

A. General Use

1. The Internet is provided for education and information.
2. Patrons must present library card or photo I.D. at checkout counter to use a computer.
3. There is no time limit unless someone is waiting then there is a limit of 1 hour. The person who has been on a computer for the longest time will be given 10 minutes to finish after they have been notified that someone is waiting.
4. Printing for a small fee is available. Printing cost is determined by paper size and whether the copy is in black and white or color. Anything printed must be paid for at the checkout counter. Cash or checks are the only acceptable forms of payment.

B. Use by minors:

1. Parents or legal guardians of children who are 11-17 years of age may sign a permission form stating that their child may use the Internet when the parent/guardian is not present. Otherwise, they must stay with their child.
2. Children who are 10 years of age and younger must have a parent or guardian with them at the computer or parents/guardians may sign a release form allowing another adult (18 years or older) to sit on the computer next to the child while he/she is using the computer.
3. Parents/guardians must come into library to sign these permission forms or releases.
4. Parents/guardians, not library staff, are responsible for all information accessed on the Internet by their children.

C. Illegal Usage

1. **Texas Penal Code, sections 43.21, 43.22, 43.24, 43.26, 43.261, and 43.262** are the statutes that make the display of obscene or pornographic materials a criminal offense.
2. Engaging in activity that is deliberately and maliciously offensive, libelous, slanderous or harassing to others.
3. Intentional transmission of propagation of computer viruses.
4. Violation of copyright or communication laws. U.S. Copyright Law (title 17.U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principals of "fair use". Any responsibility for any consequences of copyright infringement lies with the user. The library disclaims any liability or responsibility for such use.
5. Hacking(breaking into or out of any secure system)

D. Sanctions

1. Violations of the rules above will result in the user having library computer privileges suspended for 30 days. A second occurrence will result in the loss of computer privileges for 1 year.
2. Illegal acts involving the library computers, in addition to the sanctions listed above; may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.
3. Users are financially liable for any damage caused either directly or indirectly to any library computer or software.
4. The library reserves the right to terminate a patron's Internet/computer session at any time the library staff deems the use to be in conflict with the library's Internet Policy and Guidelines.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION NETWORKS

Libraries make it possible for citizens to have access to the information they need to make informed decisions. The Mitchell County Public Library is committed to networking, which represents good public policy by maximizing the use of the resources of all types of libraries. Every library user benefits from expanded access to information beyond the four walls of a single library building.

The Mitchell County Public Library uses electronic information networks such as the Internet for a variety of purposes:

1. Access to shared automation systems that provide bibliographic access to the collections of the local library and libraries in the region and across the state.
2. Access to the wealth of information resources available via the Internet.
3. Access to general and specialized shared licensed databases available to TexShare member libraries through regional and statewide cooperative programs.

Most resources available via the Internet and other electronic information networks are “global” resources rather than “local” resources. The library does not and cannot control the information content available through global resources such as information obtained from outside sources via the Internet.

Internet resources enhance and supplement resources that are available locally within a library. Library users must be aware that this library does not exercise control over information obtained via the Internet and must keep in mind the following points when evaluating information obtained via the Internet:

1. Information obtained via the Internet may or may not be reliable and may or may not be obtained from a reliable source.
2. Information obtained via the Internet may or may not be accurate.
3. Information obtained via the Internet may or may not be current and up to date.
4. Links to information on the Internet may not always be valid, and particular information sites on the Internet may sometimes be unavailable, and this unavailability often occurs unpredictably.
5. Certain information obtained via the Internet may be considered controversial by some library patrons.

The Mitchell County Public Library urges library patrons to be informed consumers and carefully evaluate information obtained via the Internet. Library staff may be available to assist patrons in making judgments about the reliability or currency of certain types of Internet information sources, but are unable to provide definitive analysis of particular sources due to the extremely large variety and volume of information available via the Internet.

This library is not responsible for damages, indirect or direct, arising from a library patron's use of Internet information resources.

PATRON ASSISTANCE AND INSTRUCTION

The Mitchell County Public Library's staff may provide assistance to patrons in the use of electronic information networks as time and staff knowledge permits.

USE OF EQUIPMENT AND NETWORKS

The Mitchell County Public Library requires that library patrons using electronic information networks such as the Internet do so within the guidelines of acceptable use. The following activities are unacceptable:

1. The Internet is provided for education and information. **Texas penal code, sections 43.21, 43.22, and 43.24** are the statutes that make the display of obscene or pornographic materials a criminal offense.
2. Engaging in activity that is deliberately and maliciously offensive, libelous, slanderous, or harassing to others.
3. Intentional transmission or propagation of computer viruses.
4. Violation of copyright or communication laws. U.S. Copyright Law (title 17 U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principals of "fair use". Any responsibility for any consequences of copyright infringement lies with the user. The library disclaims any liability or responsibility for such use.
5. Hacking (breaking into or out of any secure system).
6. Behaving in a manner that is disruptive to other users, including but not limited to overuse of computer equipment that serves to deny access to other users.

CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION NETWORKS

The Mitchell County Public Library supports the right of all library users to access information and will not deny access to electronic information networks based solely on age.

This library recognizes that the electronic information networks such as the Internet may contain material that is inappropriate for children. Parents are expected to monitor and supervise their children's use of the Internet. Library staff is unable to monitor children's use. Parents are encouraged to discuss with their children issues of appropriate use and electronic information network safety.