



INTERNET POLICY

(16 November 2006)

Public libraries provide a range of resources and services to meet the information, education and recreation needs of their communities. Today's public library provides a wide range of print and other formats. The Internet is a global network of thousands of computer networks, which provides access to public information from all over the world. The Internet is allowing public libraries to expand their collections beyond the physical confines of their buildings and to develop and offer new services.

AIM

The aim of this policy is to:

- Promote the use of the Internet as a research and educational tool.
- Provide fair distribution of Internet access amongst patrons of the Southern Tablelands Regional Library.
- Provide freedom of access to information.
- Protect library resources including limiting liability.
- Promote the responsibility of the user when using electronic resources.
- Facilitate information and computer literacy skills amongst library users.

Serious breaches of this policy may result in the removal of computer access for that person.

USER ACCESS

Public libraries provide **free** access to the Internet as part of their mission in meeting their widely acknowledged role to meet the information needs of their communities. This is in line with Section 10 of the Library Act 1939. Guidelines relating to Section 10 state that "any person (whether or not a member of the library) is entitled free of charge to access to any book of the library and to any information forming part of the information service of the library (other than information excepted from free access by guidelines issued by the Council) for use on the library premises". This is also articulated in the State Library of NSW publication Internet Access to Information: A Basic and Free Service.

USING INFORMATION

- Users may print, save or distribute information mindful of copyright requirements and limitations.
- The saving of information or files to disk may be permitted in some branches. Please check with library staff at your local branch.

STAFF ASSISTANCE WITH COMPUTER USE

One of the recognised key missions of public libraries is to facilitate the development of information and computer literacy skills. With this aim:

- Library staff can often assist patrons in accessing training in Internet use.
- As with other parts of the collection a user may ask for assistance to locate information using the Internet.

- Patrons are reminded that library staff members cannot be expected to be experts in all problems which patrons may experience in computer use.

INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

- Public libraries have no control over the information available through the Internet and therefore cannot be held responsible for its content and use.
- The Southern Tablelands Regional Library accepts no responsibility for the validity of information on the Internet.

FILTERING

- Public libraries do not support the use of filtering or censorship technologies that block access to information. This principle is in line with the Library Council of NSW Guideline on *Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries* which states that the “use of censoring software .. inhibits free access to information and does not provide adequate protection for children from all material that may be harmful on the Internet”. The Guideline also states “that Library materials that have not been subject to Federal and State restriction or prohibition should not be excluded from a public library on moral, political, racial, religious, sexist, language, or other sensitive grounds alone”

PRIVACY

- Library staff are committed to protecting each user’s right to privacy with respect to information sought or received and materials consulted or borrowed. Public libraries respect users right to privacy and do not monitor the information accessed by users.
- A public library may be required to provide Internet logs to officers legally empowered to investigate into a user’s use of the Internet where there are reasonable grounds for that officer to suspect illegal use.
- Library patrons are requested to respect the privacy of other users accessing information via library computers.

POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE MATERIAL

- Any material that may be considered potentially offensive in nature to the user or patrons of the library is the sole responsibility of the user.
- The Southern Tablelands Regional Library accepts no responsibility for patrons viewing material that they may deem offensive.
- Users are asked to be sensitive to other users when displaying potentially controversial or offensive material or images on computer screens located in public areas.

CHILDREN’S USE OF THE INTERNET

- Children’s use of the Internet is the responsibility of parents/guardians.
- Any material viewed by children whilst using the Internet is the sole responsibility of parents/guardians.
- Children under the age of 8 years are not to use the computers without adult supervision.
- People under 16 are required to have parent/guardian permission for Internet use. This can be ensured by being accompanied by the responsible adult or by completion of an Internet Permission form at time of booking. Under 16s wishing to use the Internet in the library should have their parent/guardian complete the form and return it to the Library. Their online record will be noted and an appropriate sticker will be attached to their membership card.
- The STRL ‘Kids Online’ Webpages contain valuable information for children and parents/guardians on safe use of the Internet by children.

ILLEGAL AND INAPPROPRIATE USE

Users of public libraries must not use Internet access and/or email to transmit material and statements which are:

- Illegal or fraudulent or part of any unlawful activity
- Slanderous, libellous and/or defamatory
- Offensive, obscene, pornography, or in bad taste
- Abusive and/or threatening of violence
- Incitement to break the law
- Harrassment based on sex, race, disability or other protected status
- Anonymous or repeated messages designed to annoy, threaten, abuse or torment.

COPYRIGHT

Information on the Internet is protected by copyright. Users are responsible for complying with all applicable international and federal laws governing copyrighted materials accessed through the Internet. The Southern Tablelands Regional Library is not responsible for copyright infringement by users.

FORM OF NOTICE FOR PARAGRAPH 49(7A)(c) OF THE COPYRIGHT ACT 1968 COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING

This material has been provided to you pursuant to section 49 of the Copyright Act 1968 (the *Act*) for the purposes of research or study. The contents of the material may be subject to copyright protection under the *Act*.

Further dealings by you with this material may be a copyright infringement. To determine whether such a communication would be an infringement, it is necessary to have regard to the criteria set out in Part 3, Division 3 of the Act

[Part 3, Division of the Copyright Act describes acts which do not constitute infringement of copyright in works. These include the fair dealing provisions with which librarians are familiar, for example, copying for the purpose of research or study (s.40)]

EMAIL

The use of email as a means of receiving or distributing information qualifies it as a core library service. Access to email on library computers is therefore not subject to any additional library fees and charges.

HACKING OR MISUSE OF RESOURCES

- It is illegal for users to use the Internet to gain unauthorised access to other computers or databases that are not in the public domain.
- Users must not alter the set up of computers used to access the Internet.
- Users must not damage workstations or any associated equipment.
- Users must not knowingly create or propagate a virus or any other form of malicious software.
- Users should notify staff if they experience any problems with the equipment or with access to the Internet.

COMPUTER VIRUSES

Material being downloaded from the Internet to floppy disks may contain viruses which can cause damage to a network or computer. It is the responsibility of patrons to check any downloaded material prior to installing any software onto their own hard drive. The Library accepts no responsibility for any damage caused as a result of downloaded viruses or other software.

SECURITY

- Security cannot be guaranteed in an electronic environment and therefore users are warned that all communications and transactions are vulnerable to unauthorised use. Public libraries do not assume any responsibility for damages arising from the user's use of public Internet access services provided.

This policy has been developed using the following guidelines:

1. Guideline on *Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries*, Library Council of New South Wales.
2. State Library of New South Wales Statement on *Freedom of Collection and Access for Local Government Libraries*.
3. Statement on *Free Access to Information*, Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)
4. Statement on *Online Content Regulation*, ALIA
5. Public Libraries New South Wales, Country and Metropolitan endorsed Guidelines on *Public Internet Access Guidelines for Public Libraries*.