

PORTAGE DISTRICT LIBRARY

Internet Policy

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Portage District Library is:

Helping you Access the World of Information in a Friendly Atmosphere.

Internet Public Access Statement

Through Internet public access, via computers used in the Library, the citizens of Portage are provided entrée to a world-wide network of vast information resources and services. Internet public access has far reaching benefits and value to both library patrons and staff. Internet service has been implemented by the Library in a carefully planned, organized, safe and cost effective manner.

Each patron has the right to make use of the library's hardware and software for Internet public access in order to get information or achieve personal and educational growth. Open access will be maintained in so far as it is possible to do so, but the Library reserves the right to develop reasonable standards and practices as outlined herein and in future policy statements.

Internet Public Access Practices

1. The public access computers at the Library are provided with funds generated by local taxes, and are intended for general public use, regardless of age, sex, ethnic origin, racial origin, religion or economic status. All library patrons under the age of 18 yrs. old must have parental or guardian authorization to use the Internet at Portage District Library. Independent computer users must be able to:
 - ⇒ Read and follow instructions
 - ⇒ Use a computer keyboard and mouse appropriately
 - ⇒ Operate the computer independently and with some degree of computer literacy
(since written instructions and Library staff support will be limited.)
2. The Internet consists of many protocols, including the World Wide Web, File Transfer Protocol, Telnet, Gopher and Electronic Mail. The term "Internet" will be used to include all of these protocols.
3. The Portage District Library does not provide Internet public access for use of USENET news services, and does not provide any on-line "shopping" services. The library has no control over what the Internet provides, and is not responsible for any output. The Internet contains information that may be considered inaccurate, outdated, or even offensive to some. Portage District Library is not responsible for information gained via the Internet and assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from its connections to the Internet. The library makes no guarantees, either expressed or implied, with respect to the quality or content of the information available on the Internet. Not all the information available via the Internet is accurate, current or complete. Users are encouraged to be good information consumers by evaluating the validity of information accessed via the Internet.

4. The library has availed itself of some commercially available software programs to prevent access to certain Internet sites which may contain information or graphics which have been judged to be unfit for children. Determination of “unfit” content usually is made on the basis of the content being judged to be violent, obscene or pornographic. While such blocking software is known to have limited utility and effectiveness, it is available on public access computers on which the Internet is accessible. However, it is still the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s) to be aware of the types of material which might be available and selected by their children through the Internet at the Portage District Library.

All library patrons under the age of 18 yrs. old must have parental or guardian authorization to use the Internet at Portage District Library. As with all other library materials and media formats, it is the responsibility of parent(s) or guardian(s) to monitor the information which their child accesses and selects.

5. In order to comply with P.A. 212 of 2000 (MCLA 397.606), minors are prohibited from accessing or viewing obscene matter (as defined in MCLA 752.362) and sexually explicit matter that is harmful to minors (as defined in MCLA 722.673 and 722.674) on any computers in the Library. The Library staff will monitor compliance with this requirement by periodically checking the public access computers in use by patrons. Subject to other demands on staff time for library services, the library staff will randomly engage in such checking an average of once per hour.
6. Library staff cannot provide in-depth training concerning Internet computer jargon or personal computer use, although some limited instructional support will be available.
7. Violation of the library’s Internet Policy or Guidelines by a patron will result in his/her loss of Internet privileges. Repeated violations may result in entire loss of all library privileges. In the event such action is taken, the decision may be appealed within three (3) days to the Library Director whose decision shall be final.

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