

## **MT. LEBANON PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**POLICY NUMBER:** 24

**TITLE** Computer and Internet Access and Use

**DATE ISSUED** July 15, 2004

**REPLACES:** Previous policy no. 24, issued May 27, 2004

**PURPOSE:** To promote and encourage the responsible use of the Internet as an information resource for Library patrons of all ages.

### **STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

#### **1. ACCESS TO INTERNET RESOURCES**

Internet access as an information source at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library significantly supplements the Library's existing collection, and extends the Library's commitment to meeting the community's information needs. As a new and innovative medium, however, the Internet presents a number of significant challenges to both the Library and to patrons in understanding and evaluating both the benefits and the risks it offers. This policy represents the Library's best judgment about the most effective way to offer patrons access to this valuable but controversial resource.

- 1.1. The Internet, as an information resource, enables the Library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection. It allows access to ideas, information, and commentary from around the globe that can be personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages.
- 1.2. Despite the information resources it offers, the Internet is currently a largely unregulated medium, although in certain circumstances, under the laws of Pennsylvania the display to minors of some obscene or sexually explicit materials accessible through the Internet may constitute an act of public indecency in violation of 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. sec. 5903.
- 1.3. In part because the Internet is an unregulated medium, the Library does not monitor, and cannot control, information that may be accessed by patrons, including minors, through the Internet. The Library considers it important to assist its patrons in understanding that the information accessed through the Internet may contain material that is incorrect, inauthentic, unreliable, illegal, obscene, or sexually explicit within the meaning of 18 Pa. Cons.Stat. sec. 5903.

The Library has selected sites to link to its home pages in accordance with its materials selection policies. Beyond this, the Library is not responsible for any content found on the Internet outside the Library's home page, for changes in content of the sources to which the Library home pages link, or for the content of sources accessed by the user through secondary links.

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- 1.4. The Library provides access to Internet resources equally to all library users and upholds and affirms the right of each individual to have access to constitutionally protected material.
- 1.5. Parents or legal guardians, and not the Library or its staff, however, are responsible for monitoring their children's use of the Internet and for the information selected and/or accessed by their children. The Library staff is always available to assist parents with advice about their children's use of the Internet and to answer questions or concerns. Certain of the Library's Internet access stations in the Library's Children's Room are reserved for youth and their parents or legal guardians. The Library has also created a home page for children that provides content and links to other Web sites that, in the professional opinion of the library staff, parents or legal guardians will find appropriate for their children.
- 1.6. Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding users' activities on the Internet. The Mt. Lebanon Public Library, however, will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law or necessary for the proper operation of the library.
- 1.7. The library will have no liability for direct, indirect, or consequential damages related to the use of information accessed through the Library's Internet service.
- 1.8. The Library is not responsible for damage to users' disks or computers or for any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from use of the Library's computers.

**2. CIPA COMPLIANCE**

- 2.1. The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is a federal law that requires all computers in a public library to be filtered if that library accepts any federal funds for Internet access or computers used for Internet access. [Supreme Court decision: *United States v. American Library Ass'n, Inc.*, No. 02-361 (June 23, 2003)] Mt. Lebanon Public Library complies with the requirements of CIPA.
- 2.2. All computers in the Mt. Lebanon Public Library are filtered. The filtering software is provided by the eiNetwork. The eiNetwork has a filtering software policy. Please be aware that filters are unreliable, at times blocking sites of legitimate informational or educational value, or allowing access to sites that are illegal, obscene, or sexually explicit within the meaning of 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Sec 5903.
- 2.3. Mt. Lebanon Public Library uses filtering software that blocks or filters Internet access to some Internet sites that may not be consistent with the policy of Mt. Lebanon Public Library.
- 2.4. Parents or legal guardians, and not the Library or its staff, are responsible for monitoring their children's use of the Internet and for the information selected and/or accessed by their children. The Library strongly encourages parents or legal

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guardians to supervise their children's Internet use and to provide them with guidelines about acceptable use.

- 2.5. Mt. Lebanon Public Library computers cannot be used for any fraudulent or unlawful purpose, including any activities prohibited under any applicable federal, Pennsylvania, or local laws, including activities in violation of 18 Pa Cons. Stat. Sec. 5903, which prohibits certain acts of public indecency.
- 2.6. Any adult (17 years of age or older) may request that the filter or technology protection measure be disabled without significant delay by a Mt. Lebanon Public Library staff member authorized by the Library Director, consistent with the privacy policy of Mt. Lebanon Public Library
- 2.7. An authorized Mt. Lebanon Public Library staff member may override the filter or technology protection measure for a minor (age 16 years or younger) in the event that the filter wrongly blocks or filters Internet access to a site with legitimate informational value.
- 2.8. Mt. Lebanon Public Library cannot be responsible for any patron's unauthorized use of a computer with a disabled filter.
- 2.9. Complaint Procedure  
Any patron who wishes to file a complaint about the filtering software on the library computers may do so within thirty (30) days to:
  1. The Library Director and/or the Library Board President;
  2. The Director of the Electronic Information Network;
  3. The Federal Communications Commission.

**3. CONDITIONS AND TERMS OF USE IN THE LIBRARY**

In an effort to ensure that the use of the Internet is consistent with the mission of the Library, the Library has adopted the following regulations:

- 3.1. Users must present a valid library card upon request. The Library reserves the right to require parental permission for minors to access Internet resources.
- 3.2. Internet stations will be located where staff can see them.
- 3.3. The Library reserves the right to establish procedures that make the Internet stations available on a first come, first served sign-in basis.
- 3.4. The Library reserves the right to limit time on the Internet workstations, including without limitation the right to place time limits on use of large files of still or moving images or sound, or on downloading files in any medium.
- 3.5. The use of Internet stations for game playing, e-mail, and participation in online chat or chat rooms is discouraged. The Library views these uses as low-priority uses with respect to the Library's mission and reserves the right to limit these activities on Library equipment.

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- 3.6. Internet use will be managed in a manner consistent with the Library's policy on acceptable use: The Internet workstation must be used in a responsible manner, respecting the rights of other users. Users may not make any attempt to damage computer equipment or software. Computer and Internet settings may not be changed. Users may not use the network to make unauthorized entry into other computational, informational or communication services or resources. Users may not invade the privacy of others or engage in any activity that is harassing or defamatory. Users may not jeopardize the security of access of the computer network or other networks on the Internet.
- 3.7. The Library does not allow the use of personal software.
- 3.8. The Internet workstations cannot be used for any fraudulent or unlawful purpose, including any activities prohibited under any applicable federal, Pennsylvania, or local laws, including activities in violation of 18 Pa.Cons.Stat. sec. 5903, which prohibits certain acts of public indecency.
- 3.9. It is the user's responsibility to be aware of the display of any notices concerning the copyright of information on the Internet and to respect the copyright laws of the United States.
- 3.10. The Municipality of Mt. Lebanon is committed to providing an employment environment free from sexual harassment. Users may not display on screens and/or printers materials that may be unlawful or prohibited under any applicable federal, Pennsylvania, or local laws.

**4. COMPLIANCE WITH LIBRARY POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

- 4.1. Violation of the policies and regulations that govern the use of the Library's Internet resources may result in suspension or loss of the privilege to use these resources.
- 4.2. Any illegal activity involving the Library's Internet resources or equipment will be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities.
- 4.3. The Library reserves the right to take appropriate action to ensure compliance with this policy.
- 4.4. This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Trustees.
- 4.5. In the application and interpretation of this policy, the Mt. Lebanon Public Library will use as reference The American Library Association's Code of Ethics, Freedom to Read Statement, Library Bill of Rights, and interpretations as they apply to electronic resources.