

## **Whitman Public Library INTERNET POLICY**

The Whitman Public Library endeavors to serve the educational, cultural and recreational needs of the community through the use of traditional and advanced information technology. It is within this context that the Library offers access to the Internet.

In providing public access to the Internet, the Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom expressed in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Statement on Access to Electronic Information Services and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*.

The Whitman Public Library does not monitor and has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Not all resources on the Internet provide accurate, complete or current information. While the Whitman Public Library offers guidance and suggestions as to use of the Internet, the Library does not censor access to materials or sources of information accessible via the Internet. The Internet may include materials an individual may find personally offensive, distasteful, controversial or inappropriate. The Internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population and library patrons use it at their own risk.

Internet users are reminded that the library's computer terminals are located in public areas which are shared with library users and staff of all ages and backgrounds. The library has a duty to maintain a place of public accommodation where all patrons can be free from unreasonable interference with their use and enjoyment of the facility. Whether using a library computer or a personal laptop, displaying visual or text-based graphics that are inappropriate for public viewing is prohibited. Patrons are also asked to refrain from using audio that could disturb others and use earphones.

All Internet resources accessible through the Library are provided to all library users. It is the Library's policy that parents or legal guardians must assume responsibility for deciding what library resources are appropriate for their children. Parents are encouraged to share with their children basic rules for safety and security when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Minors who visit the library without a parent or guardian are responsible for their own decisions and behaviors. . The Library staff recommends the following guidelines to parents in order to ensure that children have positive online experiences, whether at home or in the library:

- Use the Internet as a family. Join your children in Internet exploration.
- Explore the wide range of available information and tell your children about sites you consider inappropriate for them.
- Provide guidelines for your children on the amount of time they spend online, just as for television viewing.
- Instruct children NEVER to give out personal information (name, address, password, telephone number, credit card number) online.
- Teach children to be good online consumers. As with print information, consider the source, date, and accuracy of online information.

Not all workstations can be positioned to provide privacy but all library users are expected to respect the privacy of others. 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. However, the Whitman Public Library will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law.

The Library Staff will develop such rules and procedures as are necessary to ensure fair and reasonable use of the Library's Internet resources and to safeguard the Library's equipment, software and files in accordance with the policy. The Staff will assist patrons with Internet use as time allows and will offer individual instruction at designated times.

The Library's Internet connection may not be used for unlawful purposes, in an unlawful manner, or in violation of the Library's agreement with its Internet service provider. Unlawful activities include, but are not limited to: unauthorized access or "hacking" and other unlawful activities by minors online; and, unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Anyone who makes unlawful use of the Internet through the Whitman Public Library, or whose behavior does not follow the above guidelines risks suspension of Library computer privileges or suspension as is noted in the Library's Behavior policy.

Users responsible for any damage to hardware or software will be liable for repair or replacement costs.

The Trustees of the Whitman Public Library make no guarantees, either expressed or implied, with respect to any equipment, software or data. The Whitman Public Library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from use of its equipment or its Internet connection.