

Internet Access Policy

Purpose

The Kitchener Public Library believes that public libraries are community-based organizations, which are uniquely positioned to provide equitable access to information and resources, in any format, and regardless of an individual's economic status or information-seeking skills.

The Library recognizes the potential of the Internet to link individuals and organizations to new and important sources of information, and to integrate electronic resources from around the world into the Library's own collection. The Library also recognizes that it has a role in educating the community in the use of this powerful new information tool.

The Internet is a global, unregulated network that contains some material of a controversial nature. Users of the Internet should be aware that not all sites provide information that is accurate, complete, current, legal or philosophically acceptable to everyone. The Library assumes responsibility only for the information provided on its own homepage.

Library Responsibilities

The Library will provide public access to the Internet at all branches, in locations where workstations can be monitored by staff for assistance and security.

Internet workstations will be available to all members of the public, regardless of age. Each workstation will provide access to the World Wide Web; access to electronic mail, listservs and newsgroups will not be actively supported on any workstation.

The Library will make users aware of its Internet Access Policy through signage, brochures, and through on-line acceptance of this policy prior to Internet access. The Library will also develop its homepage and provide free orientation sessions, bookmarks, and other tools to guide users in navigating the Internet. Library staff is available to help customers begin their search for information, and have identified specific starting points for searches on the Library's homepage. The Library also provides access to supporting material for parents regarding child safety on the information highway.



The Library cannot control or monitor the material that may be available on this worldwide network, but may implement software and hardware control mechanisms to prohibit access to information which is illegal or inconsistent with the Library's mission and service goals.

The Library will offer a mix of filtered and unfiltered Internet workstations. Filters will be updated regularly to ensure a current list of blocked sites. However, users should be aware that no filtering product can block all offensive sites. The Library assumes no liability in the event that a filter is not 100% effective.

The Library will take reasonable measures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of Internet users. This includes providing privacy screens on unfiltered terminals.

Where permitted by copyright, users may copy information from the Internet. Printing from the Internet, and downloading to disc, will be available under the same terms and conditions as apply in all other areas of the Library.

Customer Responsibilities

All users are expected to abide by the conditions and terms of the Internet Policy, and use of the Library workstations is conditional on the user's acceptance of this Policy.

Parents and guardians are responsible for their child's choice of workstation and Internet activity, whether or not the child has a library card. Upon signing for a child's library card, a parent or guardian assumes responsibility for their child's access to all resources in the library, including electronic resources such as the Internet.

Users must be aware that Internet workstations are in public areas that are shared by people of all ages and sensibilities. All Library users are expected to respect the privacy of others using the Internet and not interfere with their use.

Misuse of Workstations

Any activity, which interferes with or disrupts Internet use, or any attempt to damage or alter equipment, software or configurations, is prohibited and may result in the suspension of library privileges. Customers who use the Library's Internet workstations for illegal purposes will be subject to prosecution.

The following activities are clearly a violation of the Library's Internet Policy:

- use of the workstations for illegal or criminal purposes, or for access to unauthorized areas
- posting or transmitting any unlawful, threatening, abusive, libelous, defamatory, obscene, pornographic or similar material

- intentionally exposing other library users or staff to information or graphics that are offensive
- infringement of copyright and other intellectual property right
- use of file transfer protocol (FTP)
- subverting, or attempting to subvert, any security devices in either software or hardware format
- attempting to install viruses or other programs designed to damage or alter software
- sending unsolicited commercial material or spamming
- misrepresenting oneself as another user
- attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords or data belonging to others
- vandalism or theft of library property