

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL LIBRARY
Public Computer and Internet Use Policy
Board Approved March 17, 2016

Access to the Internet and use of library computing equipment and networks is governed by this policy and the Library User Code of Conduct. By accessing the library computer network, library patrons agree to the terms of this policy. This policy applies to devices owned by library patrons as well as library-owned devices. Failure to abide by this policy shall result in the loss of the privilege to access the Internet or use library computers or networks.

Library users access the Internet at their own discretion. The Appalachian Regional Library cannot be held responsible for content found on the Internet, some of which is inaccurate, biased, and out of date.

Connecting to public networks and use of public computers carries some inherent risks. The library is not responsible for damage to a patron's disk or device, or for any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from the use of library devices or networks. The library network is a public communications conduit and the library cannot be held responsible for the disclosure of personal, private, or otherwise sensitive information from its network. Accordingly, the library recommends patrons do not use the library network or computers for financial transactions or other activities where sensitive personal information could possibly be disclosed.

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA): In accordance with the provisions of CIPA, the library uses software and/or devices to block or filter access to web sites which contain obscene images or language, child pornography, and material harmful to minors on all equipment used for Internet access. However, internet users should be aware that no technology protection measure is one hundred percent effective.

Internet filtering is at the network level and is applied to all Internet access including connections via patron-owned equipment. In accordance with CIPA adult patrons may request the filtering be turned off for their legitimate research. The filters cannot be turned off for minors.

Additional levels of filtering are used on equipment primarily used by minors to prevent access to material that is inappropriate for minors. However, complete protection from harmful materials or communications cannot be guaranteed.

The Internet activities and online safety of minors is ultimately the responsibility of the parent or other responsible adult. Parents should provide guidance to their children about the safe use of electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications; about unauthorized access to files or systems, including so-called

“hacking” and other unlawful activities; and about the disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information without the parent or guardian’s permission.

Guidelines

1. Adults and children ages 12-17 with an active Appalachian Regional Library card may use that card to access a public computer. Local residents without an ARL card who are eligible for one may obtain a card to access library computers. For those without a card and who are not eligible for an ARL card, guest passes are available.
2. All Internet users must read, agree to, and sign the Internet Use Policy Agreement Form. This form appears on each public PC and laptop, and users must check the "I accept" option before accessing the Internet.
4. Computers for children 17 years of age or younger are located in the Children’s area of each library. Some locations may have computers for teens in a separate location. Only patrons aged 17 and under and their accompanying caregiver may use computers designated for use by children and teens.
5. Children 11 years old and younger may access the internet on computers only when accompanied by a care giver. If such a child is on a computer in the Children’s area, the caregiver must remain in the vicinity of the minor. If a minor (under 18 years of age) uses a library computer designated for use by adults, a caregiver must sit with the minor child.
6. Internet use is on a first-come, first-served basis for time-limited sessions; the number of allowable sessions per day may also be limited. Time limits vary depending on the computer’s purpose and are posted on or near the computer or are enforced by automatic devices or software. Time limits may be modified or changed by staff to accommodate patron demand for computers.
7. Patrons may share a computer if the use is not disruptive to others.
8. Patrons may not download or install software programs, save any files to the hard drive, or make any changes to a computer or Internet setting on a library-owned computer. Patrons may save or download files on their personal memory devices.
9. In order to make the best use of limited public computers and network resources, library management reserves the right to block or filter access to web sites or services which are determined to be a drain on library resources. Patrons may request library management review specific sites blocked under this provision in order to re-evaluate the decision to block a site or service.

10. The library charges a fee for printing as set forth in the library schedule of fines and fees. No refunds will be given for undesired copies except in the case of equipment malfunction. Operator error is the responsibility of the user, not the library.

11. Library computers and networks may not be used for any illegal or fraudulent activities. Displaying, downloading, or printing obscene material as defined in North Carolina General Statute 14.190.1(b) is prohibited.

12. Headphones must be used if audio is enabled, and the volume should be set at a level that does not disturb other patrons. Unless otherwise specified, the library does not provide headphones.

13. Patrons who use library owned printers may not place envelopes, labels, or other paper in them. Upon request, and if compatible with the printer, a library staff person may place a patron's paper (but not envelopes or labels) in a library owned printer. The library will not provide paper or other supplies for personally owned printers.