

Policy: Internet**Approved: 8/16/03****Amended: 10/18/07, 6/18/09, 11/19/09, 4/18/13, 6/15/17****Reviewed: 10/18/07, 6/18/09, 11/19/09, 4/18/13, 6/15/17**

Purpose: The Bristol Public Library provides Internet access to the community for the same reasons it offers other Library resources: to facilitate research, learning, and recreational pursuits by furnishing materials of requisite and appropriate quality. The content of the Internet is, of course, beyond the control of the Library, but it is the Library's duty to take reasonable steps to assure that Internet access in any Library branch or operation is used in a manner consistent with the purpose for which it is provided.

Types of use: The Bristol Public Library recognizes Internet use for educational research to have a higher priority than Internet use for other purposes, such as communication (e-mail, social media). The Library reserves the right to appropriate use accordingly. Websites, applications, and protocols, that consistently or systematically exceed the bandwidth capacity of the Library, may be blocked at any time.

Some uses of the Internet are inconsistent with the public mandate to the Library to provide a selective range of services for the betterment of the community. Such inappropriate use of the Internet is not allowed. Examples of Internet use that are impermissible due to inappropriateness are the viewing of pornography and the use of the Internet for gambling. Senior Library staff have the authority to determine appropriateness in these areas as in all other matters relating to the library collection.

Users: Bristol Public Library cardholders may use the Internet as long as they are in good standing to check out materials, meaning that they have not exceeded the limits on overdue items or fines. The following rules apply:

- Patrons must log on with their own Library card or with a guest pass.
- Anyone without a Library card must register to use the service by showing a valid ID in order to receive a guest pass.
- All patrons under the age of 18 must have parental consent for Internet use.
- All patrons under the age of 8 must use the Internet with the direct supervision of a parent, guardian, or authorized adult.

Confidentiality and Privacy: By law, records of patrons' Internet activity are to be kept confidential. Confidential library records are not to be released except pursuant to a properly executed warrant or subpoena.

Internet users are expected to limit their attention to their own Internet sessions. However, due to the placement of the Library's Internet computers and to the nature of the enforcement of this policy (see *Enforcement*, below), Internet users have no guarantee of privacy.

Illegal use: Staff and patrons of the Bristol Public Library are prohibited from using the Library's computers for the purposes of sending, receiving, viewing, or downloading illegal material via the Internet.

Harmful to Minors: Patrons under the age of 18 are prohibited from using the Library's computers as a means of accessing material that, in the sole discretion of library staff, is deemed to be harmful to minors. Such material, as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act, includes unsafe or insecure use of e-mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications; activities such as "hacking" or other attempts at unauthorized access to online materials; or the use of the Internet so as to make unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information regarding minors. The library uses a technology protection measure (filter) in order to restrict minors' access to materials harmful to minors.

Abuse: The following will result in loss of Internet privileges:

- Using any Library computer to interfere with the operation of any other computer or network.
- Using any Library computer so as to cause it to malfunction in any way.
- Installing personal software or files on a Library computer.
- Using any Library computer so as to harass others, either in the Library or online.
- Repeatedly accessing prohibited material as described above.

Enforcement: The Library filters Internet access as per the requirements of the Code of Virginia 42.1-36.1. The filter can only be disabled upon the expression of a bona fide research need by a patron to the senior librarian on duty in the Reference Dept. of the Main Library, or by the senior staff person on duty at the Avoca Branch Library. The Library will employ technology protection measures including, but not limited to, firewalls, filters, bandwidth monitoring and shaping tools, antivirus software, anti-spyware software, and pop-up blockers. The technology protection measures utilized will monitor Internet usage, as necessary, as a means of enforcing this policy.

An individual who violates the Internet policy will be warned about the specific behavior that is prohibited. If the violation continues after warning, he or she will lose Internet privileges for a specific period of time.

Activity suspected of being illegal will be reported to law enforcement.

Anyone deprived of Internet privileges may appeal the decision to the Library Board.

Copyright: U.S. copyright law prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Any responsibility for the consequences of infringement lies with the Internet user, not with the Library.

Procedures: Library staff are authorized to develop and implement procedures necessary to carry out this policy.