

Van Horn City County Public Library Computer Usage Policies

Information contained in this document is on internet safety, use guidelines, Internet filtering, and wireless internet. The Library, in fulfillment of its mission, will provide resources and services to meet the informational needs of the community. We are committed to meeting the needs of the people we serve by providing information access within the means of the library and the limitations of policy and law. In response to patron demand for information access through technology, the library offers to the public free Internet access. The Library provides this service equally to all library users. Internet access is intended for research, educational, and recreational purposes. Parents or guardians are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children under the age of 18. The Town of Van Horn has given library staff authority and responsibility to insure the equitable, responsible and efficient use of the Internet resources. Any user who knowingly violates any of the following policies will lose their computer privileges for a length of time to be determined by the Library Branch Manager and/or Library Administrator.

INTERNET SAFETY

The Library is concerned for the safety and security of the users of online information. The Library has no control over the content of the Internet and cannot be held responsible for what the user sees when using the Internet. Restriction of a minor's access to the Internet beyond what is required by this policy is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian. A user will not use a library computer to:

1. Access, view, display, print, transmit, or distribute sites or material in violation of Texas laws regarding obscenity, child pornography, and materials harmful to minors as specified in Texas Penal Code §§ 43.22, 43.23, §43.24, or §42.26. Only a court of law can determine the legal status of a specific website. Access to websites that have not been found by a court to be obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors is legally protected under the First Amendment. Texas Penal Code §§ 43.22, 43.23, 43.24, and 43.026 provide in pertinent part:

Texas Penal Code §43.22: A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly displays or distributes an obscene photograph, drawing, or similar visual representation or other obscene material and is reckless

about whether a person is present who will be offended or alarmed by the display or distribution.

Texas Penal Code §43.23: A person commits an offense if, knowing its content and character, he wholesale promotes or possesses with intent to wholesale promote any obscene material or obscene device.

Texas Penal Code §43.24: A person commits an offense if, knowing that the material is harmful [to minors] he displays harmful material and is reckless about whether a minor is present who will be offended or alarmed by the display.

Texas Penal Code §43.26: A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally possesses visual material that visually depicts a child younger than 18 years of age at the time the image of the child was made who is engaging in sexual conduct.

2. Participate in e-mail, chat rooms, or instant messages that use information that is obscene as defined by Texas law (sited above)
3. Disclose, use, or disseminate personal information that could threaten or create a vulnerability for a minor, for any other person, or for the library
4. Attempt to gain unauthorized access to any data, computer, or network
5. Download copyrighted materials of any kind.

USE GUIDELINES

1. Users of the library's Internet connection are required to have a valid City County Public Library card or Internet Users Card. All users will be registered in the library's database of users. All users will read and understand the internet policies and by signing said card(s), agree to all policies regarding acceptable internet use. Any user under the age of 18 must also have a parent/guardian sign for them to be able to use the internet.
2. Each session is limited to 120 minutes per day. The library reserves the right to curtail or extend sessions based on needs.
3. No more than two persons may sit at one computer at a time.
4. Users wishing to use e-mail must establish their own accounts with one of the free e-mail providers, and may use the library's computers to access their e-mail account. The library's computers may not be used to send threatening, obscene, abusive or harassing messages, or for illegal

purposes.

5. Users may not enter chat rooms or use chat/electronic mail and other forms of non-chat electronic communications for purposes inappropriate in a public library setting.

6. The Internet computers cannot be used to access, transmit, upload or download, or distribute material that is pornographic, defamatory, sexually explicit, obscene, or harmful to a minor.

7. Files and bookmarks may not be saved to the hard drive, but can be saved to the patron's USB drive, floppy disk or CD. Although reasonable precautions are taken, the library does not guarantee the hard drives to be virus free. The Library assumes no liability for virus infections if patrons save files to their own Flash Drives, disks or CDs.

8. Reasonable care of the computers by the user is expected. Misuse of computers will result in loss of computer privileges. Report any computer malfunctions to the library staff.

9. Library staff may assist the user in accessing the Internet, but cannot provide in-depth assistance and/or training. The same pertains to personal computer use including word processing.

10. There is no charge for internet/computer use; however, there is a charge for each printed page and must be paid at the time of printing.

Library staff may make exceptions to these requirements in order to accommodate disabled users, or in other special needs situations.

FILTERING POLICY

The Library System filters internet access at our library.

In fulfillment of the Town of Van Horn's Library's mission, the library is committed to meeting the information needs of the patrons we serve by providing information access through technology. This access will be provided within the means of the library and within the limitations of policy and law.

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), as amended, is a federal law (PL#106-554) that is intended to protect children from access to harmful material without compromising reasonable adult use of Internet services in public libraries. State and federal acts provide that a public library is required to adopt and implement a policy of internet safety for minors, including the operation of a technology protection measure for each

computer operated by the public library that allows for access to the Internet by a minor.

Be aware that computer filters can be unreliable and at times sites with legitimate or educational value can be blocked. The unreliability of filters occasionally allows access to sites that are illegal, obscene or sexually explicit, as defined by applicable law. Further, applicable statutes contain exceptions that technology protection measures may not block scientific or medically accurate information regarding sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest, sexually transmitted disease or reproductive health.

Parents and legal guardians, and not the library staff, are responsible for monitoring their children's use of the Internet and the information accessed by minors.

WIRELESS INTERNET POLICY

The Library System provides free wireless Internet access for users with portable computers or devices capable of receiving wireless signals during normal library business hours. These access points allow users to access the Internet from their devices when sitting within range of the access points.

Library staff will provide basic information on the settings necessary to access the Internet via these connections, but are not responsible for any changes users make to their computer settings and cannot guarantee that a user's hardware will work with the library's wireless connection. If a user has problems accessing the Internet over these connections, staff cannot assist in making changes to the user's network settings or perform any troubleshooting on the user's own computer. Users should refer to their owners' manuals or other support services offered by their device manufacturer.

As with most public wireless connections, the library's wireless connection is not secure. There can be non-trustworthy third parties between the user and anybody with whom the user communicates. Another wireless user could potentially intercept any information being sent or received. Cautious and informed wireless users should not transmit their credit card information, passwords and any other sensitive personal information while using any wireless connection.

The library will not be responsible for any personal information (for example, credit card) that is compromised, or for any damage caused to your hardware or software due to electric surges, security issues or consequences caused by viruses or hacking. All wireless access users should have up-to-date virus protection on their personal laptop computers or wireless devices.

Printers are available via the wireless connection at this time, however do not work with all devices. If you need to print, please save your work to a disk or flash drive or email files to yourself, then log in to a wired library workstation and print to the public printer.

Our Internet Policy governs use of these access points. All users are expected to use the library's wireless access in a legal and responsible manner, consistent with the educational and informational purposes for which it is provided. Users should not violate federal, state or local laws, including the transmission or receiving of child pornography or harmful material, fraud, or downloading copyrighted material.

Any restriction or monitoring of a minor's access to the library's wireless network is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Laptops and other devices should not be left unattended. The library assumes no liability for theft or damage to patron devices.

BREACH OF POLICY

The Town of Van Horn's Public Library System reserves the rights to limit, refuse, and/or ban any patron from using the library equipment and computers. Violation of any aspect of this policy may result in the loss of library privileges