

# Internet Policy

## Introduction

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers, providing access to a wealth of materials that are personally, professionally, and culturally enriching. The Allen Public Library provides its patrons with Internet access as an important part of its mission to serve the educational, cultural, informational, and recreational needs of Allen's diverse community.

## Accessibility and Responsibility

Allen Public Library provides computers with Internet access in both the adult and children's areas of the library, and supports the right and responsibility of its patrons to direct their own and their children's Internet usage. The library recognizes, however, that the Internet is open to a diverse population of users, and is not subject to any regulation or control of its content. Some Internet sites may display material that is offensive, disturbing, and/or illegal. Library staff cannot act in the place of parents in supervising children's use of the Internet, or take responsibility for the material they may encounter.

Balancing these rights and concerns, Allen Public Library provides filtered access to the Internet in the children's department, and offers parents the option of approving unfiltered Internet access for older children or of sitting with the child during Internet sessions. The library encourages parents and guardians to work closely with their children in selecting materials consistent with personal and family values, and in learning to evaluate Internet resources for their currency, accuracy, and reliability.

## Privacy and Confidentiality

The Allen Public Library seeks to protect the First Amendment rights of its patrons and their individual rights to privacy. However, limited space for computer stations means that images on the screen are visible by others in the area, and the library cannot provide absolute privacy for its online patrons.

Users are also cautioned that the Internet is not a secure environment, and that the library cannot take responsibility for protecting users' personal information. Patrons should never give personal identification information to unknown or unverified sources on the Internet, and should take care to log off carefully at the end of each session to prevent accidental access to transactions, files or communications by unauthorized third parties.

The Allen Public Library respects the confidentiality of those using its electronic resources and will only release library records as required by law or for the library's operations.

## Acceptable Use

The Internet access computers at Allen Public Library may not be used by ANY user to access inappropriate or illegal materials, including but not limited to materials of an obscene nature of child pornography. In addition, minors are prohibited from accessing materials considered to be "harmful to minors." Library Administration reserves the right to determine those materials considered "harmful to minors," based on community standards. (See United States Code, Title 18, or Vernon's Texas Codes Annotated, Penal Code, Chapters 42 and 43.)

Materials obtained or copied from the Internet may be subject to laws protecting those works from unauthorized reproduction. Unless the proposed use falls within the definition of "Fair Use," a work protected by copyright may not be copied without the permission of the copyright holder. Internet users are responsible for compliance with all international, national, and state laws governing copyrighted materials.

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