

Richfield Springs Public Library

Electronic Information and Internet Use Policy

Rev. April 2, 2001

The Richfield Springs Public Library endeavors to develop collections, resources, and services that meet the cultural, informational, recreational, and educational needs of the community. It is within this policy and in response to advances in technology and the changing needs of modern times that the library provides to its patrons electronic information resources including Internet access as another source of information, intellectual development and enrichment for the community.

Electronic information resources is defined in this policy as information which is transmitted or received utilizing computers and /or telecommunication technology. Internet access policy herein applies as well to CD access, computer catalog access, and to other program access utilizing library computers.

Due to limited resources, Internet access is primarily for research and information gathering purposes only. At the discretion of the staff, game playing may be allowed when there is no conflict with primary purposes.

The Internet, as a major electronic information resource, enables the Library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection. It allows access to ideas, information and commentary from around the globe. It is an unregulated medium. It offers access to a wealth of material that is personally, professionally and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages; it also enables access to some materials that may be offensive, inaccurate or illegal. The library cannot successfully control nor monitor the vast amount of material accessible from computers and networks via the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. It is the users' responsibility to use it wisely. Likewise, the library cannot guarantee the validity nor accuracy of information found on the Internet nor its utility for the patrons' purposes.

Library patrons are advised, as with all library materials, to exercise judgement and discrimination when evaluating the usefulness and reliability of material found on the Internet. The availability of networked information via library terminals does not constitute the library's endorsement of the content of that information. If a patron believes that information obtained via library terminals is inaccurate or offensive, the patron may contact the original producer or distributor of the information.

Internet users should be advised that, because security of Internet connections is technically difficult to achieve, electronic transactions and files could become public.

The library provides Internet access equally to all library users. Ultimately, all library users, whether adults or children, are the final selectors in using the Internet and other library materials and are responsible for their individual choices and decisions, and use these resources at their own risk.

It is the library's policy that parents or legal guardians are responsible for determining what library materials and resources are appropriate for their minor children.

While recognizing that the Internet provides access to a vast array of tools and resources for different age levels and points of view, the library does not and cannot act in place or in absence of the parent and is not responsible for enforcing any restrictions which a parent or guardian may place on a minor's use of this resource.

Only parents or guardians -- not the library nor its staff -- may restrict their children, and only their own children, from access to Internet or to other library materials. Parents or guardians are responsible for Internet information selected and /or accessed by their children. We advise parents or guardians to monitor and supervise their children's Internet use.

Children also bear responsibility in using library resources properly. Their curiosity should be tempered by their judgment and upbringing. Supervision or restriction of a child's access to the Internet, as with all other library resources, is the

responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

It is essential that at all times Internet users shall:

Make only authorized access to systems, software and databases for educational and informational purposes.

Obey all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Avoid any activities which might violate other library policies.

Make no attempt to damage computer equipment, alter computer settings or install any software.

Respect international copyright laws and honor software licensing agreements.

Patrons may not use terminals for any illegal or criminal purpose, including but not limited to, violation of computer system security, unauthorized use of computer accounts or access codes, obstruction or disruption of other people's work, violation of copyright or software licensing restrictions; nor are they to use terminals to install or download software; in violation of another user's privacy; or in any manner that is disruptive to the purposes and policies of the library.

The library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility, including copyright, arising from access to or use of information obtained through its electronic information systems, or any consequences thereof.

U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principles of "fair use." Users may not copy or distribute electronic materials (including electronic mail, text, images, programs or data) without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Any responsibility for any consequences of copyright infringement lies with the user; the library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from such use.

The user assumes full responsibility for any civil and/or criminal liability incurred through use or misuse of library equipment or of any telecommunications systems, networks and/or databases accessed through that equipment.

Library personnel do not monitor nor supervise Internet access, except for the length of time of use. Given the time, place or manner, display of certain materials within the public library may be considered improper. Without acting to censor personal access, the library staff nevertheless reserves the right to prohibit the display of material that in their judgment is inappropriate for public display in this public area. This may include material that you do not find personally offensive. Staff decisions for this purpose shall be considered final.

The library will not provide access to electronic newsgroups, chat groups or other online forums not falling under the domain of the World Wide Web or Telnet. Be aware that both World Wide Web and Telnet sites do have the capability to perform online, real-time chats with users and should be avoided.

The library reserves the right to enforce a time allowance of fifteen (15) minutes or longer per session at the discretion of the staff. Staff may allow additional time to a patron if no one else is waiting. Purposes of library catalog searching, research, and information gathering shall have priority.

At the option of the staff, patron access to electronic equipment will start 15 minutes after library opening time and cease 15 minutes prior to closing time.

Sanctions --

-Violators of the **Electronic Information and Internet Use Policy** may lose library privileges.

-Failure to use Internet access responsibly will result in revocation of Internet use privileges.

-Failure to use the computer stations appropriately and responsibly, as defined in the policies and guidelines, may result in revocation of computer use privileges and possible civil or criminal legal action.

-Illegal acts involving library computing resources may be subject to civil legal action by wronged parties and to

prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities for criminal actions.

-Violations of the rules described above will be dealt with in a serious and appropriate manner.