Harford County Public Library

INTERNET POLICY

Harford County Public Library's mission is to provide responsive services to the community through equal access to library resources that enrich the quality of life and support and encourage life-long learning. As part of this mission, the library offers Internet access to individuals of all ages. In addition, the library organizes, catalogs, and indexes a variety of information which it provides through connections to Internet services, websites, and commercial databases.

The library affirms the rights of its patrons to access constitutionally protected materials. However, unauthorized or illegal use of Harford County Public Library's computing systems and facilities may result in revocation of Internet use privileges, general library privileges, and/or constitute grounds for civil or criminal prosecution.

Internet Access

Harford County Public Library uses a filtering service on all public access computers in each branch in order to prevent minors from obtaining access through the library to obscene materials or to child pornography by means of the Internet.

This service disables access to certain sites and chat rooms at these computers. Upon customer request, library staff may unblock a site. However, the library reserves the right to deny the request if the materials the customer seeks to access appear to violate the state law. The librarian in charge shall review the librarian's decision regarding the unblocking of a site and the librarian in charge shall notify the customer of the decision within 30 minutes of his/her request.

The following actions are prohibited:

- Sending, receiving, or displaying inappropriate materials, defined as text or graphics, which may be reasonably construed as obscene or constitute child pornography (as specified in the Maryland Annotated Code, Title II Subtitle 203, 207, 208).

- Engaging in any activity which facilitates sending, receiving, or displaying inappropriate materials to a minor.

- Making any attempt to access chat lines or rooms.

- Making changes to the set up or configuration of the software or hardware of the library's public access computers.

- Using unauthorized copies of copyrighted or licensed software or data.

- Loading or downloading software from the Internet or using personal software programs on the library's computers. In order to prevent computer viruses, customers may only download data to CDs and USB flash drives that are available for purchase at the library.

- Making any attempt to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others; seeking unauthorized access to the library's or any other computer system, or damaging or altering software components of any network or database.

- Installing or running any streaming video or live audio programs from the Internet as these put an undue burden on the communications network.

The library reserves the right to schedule time on Internet access computers. Users may be asked to present a current Harford County Public Library card or some other form of identification. The computers may be used for 60 minutes at a time or longer if no one is waiting.