



Internet Usage Policy

In accordance with its mission to support the cultural, educational, and recreational needs of the community, the Detroit Public Library offers Internet access to all patrons who have a valid DPL card. Users under age eight must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other responsible party with a valid DPL card.

Consistent with our mission and the professional principles of public librarianship, this Internet Use Policy affirms intellectual freedom, equity of access, individual responsibility, confidentiality of information about users and their use of all library resources including electronic resources, and the safeguarding of First Amendment rights. The Library affirms the following principles and user rights as delineated by the American Library Association.¹

- Electronic information, services, and networks provided by libraries should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users.
- Libraries and librarians should not deny or limit access to information available via electronic resources because of its controversial content or because of personal beliefs or fears of confrontation.
- Information retrieved or utilized electronically should be considered constitutionally protected unless determined otherwise by a court with appropriate jurisdiction.
- Responsibility for, and any restriction of, a child's use of the Internet rests solely with his or her parents or legal guardians.

The Library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from its connections to the Internet. The Library makes no guarantees, either expressed or implied, with respect to the quality or content of the information available on the Internet. Not all the information available via the Internet is accurate, current or complete. Users are encouraged to be good information consumers by evaluating the validity of information accessed via the Internet.

Users are cautioned that ideas, points of view, and images can be found on the Internet which are controversial, divergent and inflammatory. The provision of access does not mean or imply that the Library endorses or sanctions the content or point of view of any of the information or commentary which may be found on the Internet.

The Internet offers access to a wealth of information that can be personally, professionally and culturally enriching. Library staff have attempted to identify on the Library's home page specific starting points for searches and links to sources on the Internet which are consistent with the Library's mission and roles. But, because the Internet is a vast and unregulated information network, it also enables access to ideas, information, images and commentary beyond the confines of the Library's collection, mission, selection criteria and collection development policies.

Because of this and the fact that access points on the Internet change often, rapidly and unpredictably, the Library cannot protect individuals from information and images which they might find offensive or disturbing.

Computers available to the public which can be used to access the Internet must be shared by library users of all ages, background and sensibilities. Since staff cannot consistently and effectively monitor the public's use of the Internet, individuals are asked to be sensitive of others' values and beliefs when displaying potentially controversial information or images on public computer screens.

Users are cautioned that, because security in an electronic environment such as the Internet cannot be guaranteed, all transactions, files and communications are vulnerable to unauthorized access and use and, therefore, should be considered public.

Staff Assistance

Staff will assist library users in getting started on the Internet at reference or information service points. Staff will try to answer specific questions about the Internet and offer suggestions for effective searching. Staff can also provide information about Internet training opportunities and Internet books and manuals. More extensive training will be available at designated training centers.

User Responsibilities

All users of the Internet are expected to use this library resource in a responsible and courteous way, consistent with the purposes for which it is provided, and to follow all Internet-related rules, regulations and procedures established for its use including, but not limited to, those of the Library and MichNet.² Responsible, courteous use of the Internet includes:

- Recognizing that the Internet, like all of the Library's information sources, must be shared and used in a manner which respects the rights of others and refrains from activities that prevent others from using it.
- Using the Library's Internet resources for educational, informational and recreational purposes only.
- Refraining from using the Library's Internet resources to conduct a business or commercial enterprise, or engage in commercial activity such as the distribution of advertising.
- Refraining from illegal or unethical use of the Internet.
- Respecting intellectual property rights by making only authorized copies of copyrighted, licensed or otherwise-controlled software or data residing on the Internet.
- Respecting the privacy of others by not misrepresenting oneself as another user; by not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others; and by not seeking disallowed access to any computer system via the Internet.
- Refraining from damaging equipment or altering the setup of computers used to access the Internet at the Library.

- Refraining from installing or running personal software on a DPL computer.
- Refraining from altering or damaging software or data stored on Internet-accessible computers.
- Refraining from the deliberate propagation of computer worms and/or viruses.
- Refraining from the transmission of threatening, harassing or abusive language and images.
- Respecting posted time limits and sign-in procedures.

Netiquette

The term netiquette is used to refer to an emerging set of guidelines and norms for the use of Internet services and communication tools that help to ensure courteous and effective communication. The Library encourages computer users to learn and practice proper netiquette. For more information, see the DPL's [netiquette page](#).

Compliance with the Library Policy and Guidelines

In addition to this specified policy, general guidelines for the use of all public-access computers govern the use of the Internet in the Library. Violation of the policies and regulations that govern the use of the Library's Internet resources may result in suspension or loss of the privilege to use these resources. Illegal activity involving the Library's Internet resources will be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities.

Child Safety on the Internet

Parents or guardians are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Children who use the Internet unsupervised may be exposed to inappropriate or disturbing information and images. Parents are encouraged to discuss the use of the Internet in relation to family values and boundaries with their children and to monitor their children's use of the Internet.

To assist parents, the Library has available on-line and in print form the pamphlet *Child Safety on the Information Highway* published by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.³ The pamphlet includes "Guidelines for Parents" and "My Rules for On-line Safety." Parents are encouraged to review this information with their children.

Sexual Images on the Internet

Occasionally, Library customers may be observed viewing explicit sexual images on an Internet computer. In such an instance, anyone offended by the images should inform a Library staff member who will ask the customer to stop or move to another computer, if possible.

E-mail

The Library is not able to offer e-mail accounts to library users at this time, but the Library can provide information on low cost e-mail or Internet access accounts.



Questions, Comments, or Concerns

The Library wants to know what you think of its Internet service. A Customer Service Form may be used to communicate any message to the Library. Please feel free to ask a question or raise a concern at any time. If your concern cannot be resolved immediately by a staff member, please fill out a Customer Service Form so that the Library may continue to address the issue until it is resolved.

(last update 7/28/04)

Footnotes

1. For more information, see [Library Bill of Rights](#), [Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#), and [Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#).
2. For more information, see [MichNet Acceptable Use Policy](#).
3. For more information, see [Child Safety on the Information Highway](#).