

Highland County Public Library

Public Internet Use Policy

Highland County Public Library is pleased to offer its patrons access to the Internet. Realizing that the library's book collection and other available materials may not contain sufficient information to answer all queries, the library offers access to the Internet as a supplemental information resource.

Access and Use Policy:

The Internet is an enormous network of computer networks that connect with each other to share information. Governments, businesses, associations, schools, and individuals make information available to Internet users. Because it has so many contributors, the Internet contains a wide variety of material and opinions from varied points of view, some of them controversial. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete, or current information. Users are strongly urged to be critical consumers, and to evaluate information carefully.

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), HCPL provides Internet workstations equipped with filtering/blocking technology. However, the library recognizes that filtering/blocking technology is not a completely reliable means of protection from materials that may be offensive, controversial or illegal. **HCPL assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from the use of its Internet connection.** Users are responsible for the access points they reach. All adults (18 years and older based on library card registration) seeking unfiltered Internet access for their own use may temporarily disable filtering for each session. Adults may not share unfiltered computers with minors (under 18 years old).

Parents of minor children must assume responsibility for their children's use of the Internet through the library's connection. We encourage parents to take an active role in their children's use of the Internet, and to talk about their personal values and expectations of their children's use of this resource. Parents should be aware that children will have full access to our computer programs and to the internet, other than those sites blocked by our obscenity filter. The only way to monitor their children's search is for the adult to be present at the keyboard.

Acceptable Use Guidelines:

1. To use the Internet at HCPL you must log in on the computer use sheet. Use of the library's internet by adults implies consent with the Internet Use Policy posted in the computer section. Library patrons under 18 years old must have a signed Library Internet Use consent form from their parent in order to use the internet in the library.
2. The Internet computer is in a public place and can be viewed by other people. Privacy and confidentiality cannot be assured. Users should be sensitive to others when choosing Internet sites to explore.
3. Users are limited to half an hour if others are waiting. However, if no one is waiting, the person may stay on until someone else wishes to use the computer.
4. Users must end their session and leave the terminal when asked to do so by authorized staff.
5. The number of access sessions available per day, per user, may be established by the Librarian in Charge: such limitations will be dependent on demand in order to provide access for the majority of users.
6. A maximum of two individuals may use the same workstation so long as this does not disrupt others in the library.
7. Users are allowed to print electronic files or copy them to their own storage media. The charge for printouts is \$.25 per page for text, and \$1.00 per page for pictures. The charge for diskettes or CD-Roms is \$1.00 each.

8. Downloading and FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is allowed provided it can be accomplished within time limits.
9. Regular e-mail accounts are not available on the library's computer. Web-based e-mail may be used through a web site such as Hotmail, Gmail, or Yahoo.

Unauthorized Use:

Unauthorized use of the Internet via HCPL computer may result in the loss of Internet privileges. The following are prohibited.

1. Using the HCPL computer for illegal or criminal purposes, including accessing obscenity and pornography and accessing materials harmful to minors.
2. Harassing, bullying (also called "cyber-bullying"), libeling or slandering.
3. Copyright violations and violation of software licensing agreements.
4. Destruction or damage of equipment.
5. Using the HCPL computer to "hack" the HCPL system or any other system. This includes changing, moving, deleting, hiding, and otherwise altering the system configurations as set up by the library staff.
6. Violation of another user's privacy, including reading, or attempting to read, any protected file including a person's e-mail. Unauthorized access to another person's social media account is also prohibited.
7. Installing personal software on the HCPL computer without the express permission of the Librarian.
8. Accessing gambling sites or using library computers for gambling.
9. Obstructing other people's work by consuming excessive amounts of system resources and time. You must respect the privacy of others using the HCPL computer by not interfering with their use.

Any person making unauthorized use of computers and the Internet in violation of applicable laws may be prosecuted.

Staff Assistance:

Library staff will assist patrons with Internet use as time permits. Formal instruction may be provided at designated times. Internet-trained staff may not be available at all times and cannot be considered "expert".

Library Rights:

- To terminate a user's session, without notice.
- To erase any and all user files stored on library equipment, without notice.
- To immediately suspend persons from computer use for violating these rules and regulations.
- To limit the software available to users to library owned resources and to deny the loading of user provided software.

Termination of Internet Privileges

When library employees observe that a user has failed to comply with the Internet Use Policy they are authorized to terminate that user's access session, or to prohibit that user from subsequent access sessions for up to two weeks from the date of informing the user of that action. After a meeting with the library's administrative authority, the user may be permanently barred from Internet access at the library.

Internet users whose access session has been terminated or prohibited will be given information concerning the process to protest the action and/or request that internet access privileges be reinstated.

Rights of Patrons:

The standards of intellectual freedom and confidentiality endorsed by the American Library Association and the Board of Directors of the Highland County Public Library for traditional library media shall apply to electronic media as well, including the Internet.

Library staff will treat the contents of electronic files as private and confidential. Any inspection of electronic files, and any action based upon the inspection, will be governed by applicable Federal and Virginia laws as well as the policies of HCPL.

Patron Responsibilities:

By signing up for Internet access at HCPL, the patron agrees to abide by the terms of this Internet use policy.

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