

MEXICO-AUDRAIN COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND INTERNET POLICY

PURPOSE

The Mexico-Audrain County Library District provides access to the Internet as one means of fulfilling its mission to deliver high quality, technologically current reading and information services that support the lifelong learning and recreational needs of our diverse population. All Internet resources accessible to users in the library are provided to cardholders with the understanding that it is the individual user's responsibility to demonstrate judgment, respect for others, and appropriate conduct while using public library resources and facilities. Internet computers will not be used by anyone, including minors, for illegal activity, or to access illegal materials. Library employees are authorized to take prompt and appropriate actions to enforce the rules of conduct, and/or to prohibit use by individuals who fail to comply with the Internet safety policy as stated or implied herein. Parents are responsible for their minor children's use of the library's Internet access independently and are requested to monitor their children's Internet use.

DISCLAIMER

The Mexico-Audrain County Library District cannot control the content of resources available on the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. The Internet offers open access to information, ideas and commentary from around the world in an unregulated medium. As such, it offers access to a wealth of material that is personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, but also enables access to some material that some may find offensive, disturbing and/or illegal, inaccurate or incomplete. The availability of information does not constitute endorsement of the content by the Mexico-Audrain County Library. The Internet, as an information resource, enables the library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection. Library patrons use it at their own risk. Use of Internet resources carries with it a responsibility to evaluate the quality of the information accessed. Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the library is the responsibility of the user. In case of minors, it is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian. The public library, unlike schools, does not serve in place of a parent. Librarians cannot act in the place of parents by supervising children as they explore the Internet. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians.

PRIVACY

The Mexico-Audrain County Library District seeks to protect the first amendment rights of its patrons and their individual right to privacy. Although judicious placement of terminals and other reasonable means are taken to protect the privacy of Internet users and the interests of library visitors by making images on screens less likely to be viewed by others, absolute privacy for users at computers in the library is not guaranteed. Users are urged to respect the sensibilities of others when accessing

information that may be offensive to someone else. There exists a possibility of inadvertent viewing by other patrons, either by watching the user's screen, or because a user may leave the screen unattended.

The "rules of conduct" apply to the behavior of patrons using computers. Failure to follow this policy could result in the loss of computer privileges and/or library privileges. Users are cautioned that the Internet is not a secure environment. Personal information included in all transactions, files and communications may be subject to unauthorized access by third parties. The Mexico-Audrain County 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

1. Internet access computers may be used to access a variety of electronic communication resources, including email. Although the library does not provide support for email accounts or web pages for users, Internet access computers may be used to access free email and web page accounts available from a variety of sources. Note: Users, including minors, are warned that other individuals may obtain unauthorized access to personal information and/or may misrepresent themselves. Users, including minors, are advised not to share personal identification information to unknown or otherwise unverified sources via electronic communication.
2. Internet access computers may not be used to access games.
3. The library's Internet access computers may be used to access information, except as otherwise specified as unacceptable, from a variety of sources such as educational or commercial. The user is the selector of the material accessed and is therefore the responsible party. The user is responsible for complying with all restrictions governing access to specific sites. Any fees are the responsibility of the user, not the library. In the case of minors, fees are the fiscal responsibility of the parent or guardian. In no event shall the Mexico-Audrain County Library have any liability for lost profit or for any direct or indirect special, punitive or consequential damages, or any liability to any third party.
4. Not all information on the Internet is available to all users. Users may be unable to connect to other Internet sites for various reasons. The library cannot guarantee or provide access to restricted sites requiring passwords, fees or user accounts.
5. Library employees provide basic introductory training concerning Internet or personal computer use as time permits but do not provide in-depth Internet assistance. Staff can locate books and other library resources dealing with computer-related topics and can provide referrals to area computer classes.

RULES OF CONDUCT

1. Internet computers will not be used for illegal activity, or to access illegal materials. Illegal materials include, but are not limited to, obscenity and child pornography as defined in U.S. Code Title 18. Access by minors to materials deemed "harmful to minors" is prohibited. Library

administration reserves the right to determine based on community standards, materials considered to be "harmful to minors".

2. Downloading to anywhere other than a USB drive is prohibited.
3. Installation or modification of software is prohibited.
4. Users will respect copyright laws and licensing agreements. Materials obtained or copied on the Internet may be subject to laws that govern reproduction of copyrighted works. A work protected by copyright may not be copied without permission of the copyright owner unless the proposed use falls within the definition of "fair use. Patrons are responsible for compliance with all international, national and state laws governing copyrighted materials. (U.S. Copyright Law Title 17, U.S. Code). Users will not make any attempt to misuse the computer. Misuse includes, but is not limited to, using the computer for illegal activities, hacking into the library computer system or any other computer system; damaging or attempting to damage computer equipment or software, interfering with system operations, integrity or security; gaining unauthorized access to another person's files; sending harassing messages to other computer users; altering or attempting to alter the library computer's settings; or violating copyright laws and software licensing agreements. Misuse of the computer may result in the loss of computer privileges, loss of library privileges and possible prosecution. Damages resulting from the misuse are the responsibility of the user, or, in the case of minors, the parent or guardian.
5. Computers are available on a first come, first served basis. Computers will not be reserved. Telephone reservations will not be taken.
6. Access sessions are limited to maximum of 1 hour in length.
7. Users will end their session and leave the computer if asked to do so by library staff, even if they have not completed their sessions.
8. Users will respect the privacy of other users, and will refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others. Users are prohibited from the unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information of others. Users are warned that other individuals may obtain unauthorized access to personal information and/or may misrepresent themselves.
9. By mutual agreement two or more persons may share one access session as long as their behavior and conversation does not disturb other users or library staff and they do not physically block or impede access within the library.

USE OF FILTERS

Computers in the library are filtered. The Mexico-Audrain County Library District supports the right and responsibility of parents to direct the use of the Internet by their own children. Each parent or guardian when applying for a library card for their child must complete and sign the library's Internet Use Policies form. Computers with "catalog only" signs are available for patrons. They have no Internet access and will allow use of the library catalog and library sponsored databases.

TERMINATION OR PROHIBITION OF USER ACCESS

When library employees observe that a user has failed to comply with the ER/Internet policy, they are authorized to terminate that user's access session or to prohibit that user from future 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 patron may be permanently barred from Internet access from 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. Temporary or permanent denial of privileges at any Mexico-Audrain County Library branch will be effective at all Mexico-Audrain County Library District facilities.

First inappropriate behavior will result in termination of the session and formal warning. Note is placed in user's personal library account.

Second inappropriate behavior will result in termination of the session and prohibition of access to library computers for two weeks. This incident will be noted in user's personal library account. The patron must make an appointment with Library Administrative Authority to request a hearing to reinstate computer privileges.

This meeting will determine whether access to Internet will be reinstated or permanently denied.

DEFINITIONS

Cardholder—citizen with an active Mexico-Audrain County Library District card

Non-resident—individual who is not eligible for a Mexico-Audrain County Library District card

Guest—a non-resident or individual who is not eligible for an active Mexico-Audrain County Library District card but requests use temporarily during their visit

Adult—any individual 18 or over

Minor—any individual that has not yet reached the age of 18

Session—period of time spent at a library computer which begins when the user logs on the first time by entering his name in the log, maximum allowed session is 1 hour in length

Staff—any library employee designated by library administration to perform the daily functions involved in the operation of the library.

GUIDANCE FOR SUPERVISING CHILDREN'S USE

The public library, unlike schools, does not serve in place of a parent. Librarians cannot act in the place of parents in providing care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians. The following are recommended guidelines for parents and guardians to ensure children have positive online experiences, whether at home or in the library.

Use the Internet as a family. Join your children in Internet exploration.

Explore the wide range of available information and tell your children about sites you consider inappropriate for them.

Encourage children to use sites recommended on the library's homepage and counsel them to avoid sites you consider unsuitable.

Provide guidelines for your children on the amount of time they spend online, just as for television viewing.

Instruct children never to give out personal information (name, address, password, telephone number, credit card number) online.

Teach children to be good online consumers, as with print information, consider the source, date and accuracy of online information.

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