

NEWTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY PUBLIC USE COMPUTER POLICY

In response to advances in technology and the needs of our communities, the Newton County Public Library will provide public access computing for its patrons. This access will include Internet access, reference and educational software, wireless access (WIFI) and productivity software.

The Newton County Public Library does not monitor, nor does the Library have control over the information accessed through the Internet, and cannot be held responsible for its content. The Internet is a global entity with no controls of users or content. Not all sources on the Internet contain accurate, complete or current information. The Newton County Public Library denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of the information acquired via the Internet.

All computer resources accessible through the Library are provided equally to patrons upon presentation of Library card or photo identification.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF USERS

Library staff members are not able to provide in-depth computer training. Patrons without computer skills or the ability to use a mouse will be asked to work through the tutorials provided through the Library's public access computers. Please refer to the Library's Computer and Device Assistance Policy for a more complete interpretation.

All computer users, whether utilizing the Library's equipment or utilizing the wifi network, are expected to use the Library's resources in lawful, ethical and responsible manners. The Library administration will be the sole arbiter of such cases.

Misuse of the Library's computers or wifi by any patron, regardless of age, will result in the loss of computer privileges, potential loss of library privileges, and possible prosecution. Such misuses include, but are not limited to: using the computer for illegal activities; attempting to damage computer equipment or software; interfering with systems 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's computer settings; and violating copyright laws and software licensing agreements. Internet users who shop online while at the Library or while using the Library's wifi do so at their own risks.

Users will not misrepresent themselves online, use demeaning, threatening or vulgar language, access adult-content or pornographic websites, or otherwise prevent, disrupt or corrupt the exchange of information or ideas. Once again, Library administration will be the sole arbiter of such cases.

POLICIES FOR USE

AGE LIMITS:

Children between the ages of 3 and 9 may use computers when accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Patrons who are 10 to 14 years of age may use computers, but these patrons must present a signed Internet Use Agreement for Minors to use Internet-accessible workstations. Parents have the authority and the responsibility to monitor or revoke this privilege.

USE LIMITS:

All computer resources accessible through the Library are provided equally to patrons upon presentation of Library card or photo identification. All users must be in good standing with no overdue materials or outstanding fines at any Library within the Newton County Public Library system.

All filtering and protective software works in the Libraries' wireless networks.

Only two people may be at a workstation at one time.

Food and drink are prohibited at workstations.

Computer users may print, and will be charged 10 cents per page for black and white printouts, and 25 cents per page for color printouts. Any patrons making use of the Library system's remote printing services may print, and will be charged 10 cents per page for black and white printouts, and 25 cents per page for color printouts.

Computer files cannot be saved to Library computer hard drives. Patrons who wish to share their work or download information from the Internet may do so by providing their own flash drives. Patrons who do not know how to save information may consult the computer for information on saving files or work, and opening saved work.

While headphones or earbuds are not provided by the Library, patrons are welcome to use their own headphones or earbuds.

Library staff members have the right to shut down computers for protective purposes during storms.

The Library does not offer electronic mail accounts via its Internet Service Provider (ISP). Patrons may use commercial e-mail to establish e-mail accounts.

PARENTAL GUIDELINES:

Public Libraries, unlike schools, do not serve *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent). Librarians cannot act in the place of the parent in providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents and guardians.

The following guidelines are recommended for parents and guardians to ensure that children have positive online experiences and learn the rules for online safety, whether at home or at the Library.

- Use the Internet as a family. Join your children in Internet exploration, and then you'll know what websites they visit, and be able to guide them in selecting good quality websites.

- Provide guidelines for your children about the amount of time that 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.

- Instruct children NEVER to arrange to meet someone that they've met online.

- Instruct children in the proper use of e-mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communication.

The Newton County Public Library strongly recommends that parents supervise their children's Internet use at home and at the Library, and that parents teach children to make informed online decisions.

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