



Port Townsend Public Library Internet Policy

Purpose:

Access to digital information, services, and networks is a core public library service. From the Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights from the American Library Association, "Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. Libraries and librarians protect and promote these rights by selecting, producing, providing access to, identifying, retrieving, organizing, providing instruction in the use of, and preserving recorded expression regardless of the format or technology." ¹ Port Townsend Public Library (PTPL) provides information resources through access to the Internet. This service is available as part of the Library's mission, "Uplifting our community through reading, learning, connection, and creativity."

Disclaimer for Use:

The Internet offers access to many valuable sources of information, but not all sites are accurate, complete, or current. The Library does not monitor or control the information available on the Internet. There are sites that carry information which individuals may think controversial or inappropriate. Users are encouraged to take advantage of the Internet but also to exercise discretion and to respect the privacy of others.

The Library makes no representation or guarantee that any part of the computer and Internet services, including the wireless service, will be uninterrupted, error-free, virus-free, timely, or secure, nor that any Internet content is accurate, reliable or safe in any manner for download or any other purpose. Use of the Library's hardware, software, Internet service, wireless network, and electronic information resources is entirely at the risk of the user.

The Library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from its connections to the Internet. Patrons and visitors are prohibited from viewing, printing and downloading any material defined as illegal by Federal, State and local laws.

¹ "Access to Digital Information, Services, and Networks", American Library Association, July 7, 2006.
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/node/35> (Accessed November 12, 2018)
Document ID: 727d15b1-bf93-1ef4-417e-4a8c3847fa1f

Staff members will attempt to identify and resolve problems with Library hardware, software, and Internet access. In many cases, however, assistance from City information technology or vendor staff is needed before service can be restored.

Staff members are trained to assist customers in using the Library catalog and Website as well as databases and other Web services selected and purchased by the Library. In some cases, vendor assistance is needed to resolve problems with or to answer specialized questions about these services.

The City's ***Share the Space Policy*** applies to the use of the Internet. The ***Share the Space Policy*** is posted in the Library and other City facilities.

Content Monitoring and Filtering:

Due to the communal nature of the public computers being seen and accessed by all ages, filtering software is in place by the City of Port Townsend. In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), PTPL employs internet filtering software and other technology protection measures on all public computers and Wi-Fi networks.

PTPL uses filtering technology as required by CIPA which mandates that any public library using federal funding must filter internet access to visual depictions that are (a) obscene; (b) child pornography; or (c) harmful to minors (as defined in the United States Code¹ and case law).

A user may request that an internet site be blocked or unblocked for "bona fide research or other lawful purposes,"² by contacting library staff. The site will be reviewed in a timely manner, and a decision about whether to block or unblock the site will be made in accordance with PTPL guidelines.

Parents and Children:

Library policy gives parents or guardians the right and responsibility to restrict their children's and only their own children's use of Library resources, including computers and the Internet. The Library respects the right of parents and guardians to determine what it is appropriate for their children to read, hear, and view, but the Library cannot enforce these rules, which may be different for each family in our community. To assist parents in this role, the Library provides resources, including links to age-appropriate Internet sites, information about Internet safety,

² "Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)," Federal Communications Commission, Last reviewed edited December 30, 2019. <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act> (Accessed January 24, 2024)

and access to filtered search engines for those who choose to use those resources. Parents and guardians are encouraged to supervise and to participate actively in their children's computer and Internet use. The Library does not act *in loco parentis*: It does not have the same role in supervising children that schools have, and it cannot substitute its judgment for that of parents or enforce parents' decisions about their children's Internet use other than blocking Internet access at the request of the parents or guardians.

However, in order to comply with CIPA, the library has taken certain measures to assist in the safe and effective use of internet by minors. These measures include employing internet filtering software and other technology protection measures on all public computers and Wi-Fi networks.

WiFi:

WiFi is available throughout the Library building. The Library has a limited number of electrical outlets and request that members and visitors do not unplug library devices in order to plug in their personal electronics or have cords that impede or block access. Please understand that the staff cannot work on patrons' personal computers if they are having difficulty with WiFi reception or printing.

Guidelines for Use:

In order to make the Internet available to as many people as possible and to ensure that it is used in a manner consistent with Library policies, the Library will adopt and post rules regarding use of the public computers. Time limits on computer workstations and bandwidth limits on wireless access may be enforced to ensure that all customers have the opportunity to use computer and Internet resources.