



Policy 6.4 Internet Policy

Adopted by Library Board of Trustees
3/26/2009

Policy on Public Use of the Internet

To fulfill its mission of providing public access to information of all types in a wide range of formats, North Olympic Library System (NOLS) provides access to Internet resources. The Internet is a series of communication linkages leading to a highly diverse array of information content. The Internet offers access to many valuable local, national, and international sources of information, enrichment and recreation. Some information found on the Internet, however, may be inaccurate, incomplete, dated, or offensive to some individuals. A good information consumer must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of information found on the Internet.

Guidelines on Access to Information

The NOLS Internet Policy is guided by the following American Library Association statements on access to information:

- The Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom to Read Statement
- Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: Free Access to Libraries for Minors and Access to Electronic Information Services and Resources

Copies of these documents are available at www.ala.org, and as appendices to NOLS Policies # 2.1-2.6, "Collection Management."

In general, the Library is guided by a commitment to access to information policies that provide appropriate protections for its patrons, while being consistent with the Library's longstanding commitment to the principles of free expression as set forth in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Conditions Governing Internet Use in the Library

NOLS provides access to the Internet equally to all registered NOLS customers in good standing as an integral component of information delivery. NOLS provides "visitor" access to the Internet for customers who are not registered NOLS patrons, subject to availability.

The Library upholds and affirms the right of individuals to have access to constitutionally protected materials.

As set forth in greater detail below, in accordance with the Children' Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Library has implemented software filtering on all of its Internet-accessible computers. To adults 17 years or older, the Library provides a choice of filtered or unfiltered Internet access.

The Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through its electronic information systems, or any consequences thereof. The availability of information does not constitute endorsement of the content by NOLS.

The Library makes every effort to provide continuity of Internet service, but is not responsible for any disruptions to a customer's Internet session.

Transaction logs, electronic mail and other information which could be used to identify users with specific materials or subject matter are considered by the Library to be confidential, and will not be divulged to anyone other than the user. Such records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal or local government except pursuant to such process, order or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state or local law relating to criminal, civil, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power.

Although the Library respects the confidentiality of Internet use within the limit of its own policies and local, state, and federal statutes, it reserves the right to investigate and suspend individuals suspected of misuse and take appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action.

The Library will establish appropriate and equitable registration procedures for scheduling of Internet sessions. Due to the limited number of Internet workstations available for public access to the Internet, the Library may set limits on use of Internet workstations:

- The Library may limit the length of session times, and the number of sessions which a customer may schedule and use each day.
- The library may limit transmission or downloading of large files or access to sites or programs which place an unduly heavy demand on available bandwidth.

Internet Customer Conduct and Responsibility

Internet customers are responsible for being familiar with, and complying with, the NOLS Internet Policy.

Customers are expected to access the Internet in compliance with NOLS Policy 5.1, "Patron Rule of Conduct". Violations may result in the loss of Internet privileges. Internet conduct which has been specifically identified as unacceptable under Policy 5.1 includes, but is not limited to:

- Viewing illegal materials (obscenity, child pornography or materials harmful to minors).

Customers must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws as they apply to individual use of electronic systems, and are solely responsible for violations they or their legal dependents commit. Acts contrary to local, state and federal law shall be considered a violation of NOLS Internet Policy and be subject to suspension of library privileges and appropriate penalty under law.

Customers assume all responsibilities for honoring copyright law. Violations of copyright may be subject to Library sanction or legal action.

Customers should not attempt to change program settings on the Internet workstation, boot from an external device such as a flash drive, or try to run their own software. Customers who use Library computers for illegal activity or who destroy or attempt to destroy hardware or software may be suspended from using the library and shall be liable for civil and/or criminal legal action. Customers agree to INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS NOLS, its employees and agents from any claim, demand, liability, cause of action, suit, judgment, or expense, (including attorney's fees), arising out of any breach of this policy statement. Using the computer workstation constitutes an agreement by the user to these terms.

Customers may not use Library computers to conduct commercial activities, i.e. operate a business within the library.

Customers are responsible for paying printing costs, at the rates established by the NOLS Board.

Customers may not employ Library systems for the purpose of libel, slander, or any form of harassment.

Compliance

The Library reserves the right to take appropriate action to insure compliance with this policy. Penalties for non-compliance with the customer Conduct and Responsibility provisions of this policy include:

- The Branch Managers or his/her designee may suspend customers from using the Internet or ban them from the Library for up to two weeks.
- Longer suspensions may be imposed for chronic or serious abuses with the approval of the Assistant Director.
- Customers may appeal all denials to the Director and subsequently to the Board of Trustees.

Filtering

As required by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), in order to remain eligible for certain federal funding, the Library has implemented software filtering on all of its Internet-accessible computer terminals. The software installed on Internet-accessible computers at the Library protects against access to visual depictions of obscenity, child pornography, and, in the case of persons under the age of 17 years, materials that are "harmful to minors."

Users should be aware that all currently available filtering software results in a degree of both "underblocking" (i.e., permitting access to certain material that falls within the foregoing categories) and "overblocking" (i.e., denying access to certain constitutionally protected material that does **not** fall within the foregoing categories). The Library has attempted to select filtering software that best complies with CIPA while providing Library users with the broadest possible access to constitutionally protected speech and information. The Library cannot and does not guarantee that the filtering software will block all obscenity, child pornography, or materials that are harmful to minors. Nor can the Library guarantee that the filtering software will always permit access to sites that may have legitimate research or other value.

Users 17 years of age or older may request that filtering software be disabled on the workstation they are using during their Internet session.

All customers, whether using filtered or unfiltered workstations, must comply with the Rules governing Internet Use, listed above.

Access by Minors

It is the responsibility of parents or legal guardians to guide and control their child's use of the Library and library resources, including the Internet. Beyond the implementation of filtering software, as described above, the Library cannot and will not act in the place of parents in providing supervision of children as they explore the Internet.

The Library provides the following safety guidelines to assist families in guiding minors in safe and secure use of e-mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

- Never give out identifying information such as home address, school name, or telephone number.
- Let parents or guardians decide whether personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information should be revealed.
- Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone via the computer without parents' or guardians' approval.
- Never respond to messages that are suggestive, obscene, threatening, or make one uncomfortable.
- Have parents or guardians report an incident to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678 if one becomes aware of the transmission of child pornography.
- Remember that people online may not be who they say they are.
- Remember that everything one reads may not be true.

Wireless Internet Access

Free wireless Internet access is available at all NOLS branches. The Library's wireless internet access is filtered.

Wireless customers are expected to access the Internet in compliance with NOLS Policy 5.1 "Patron Rule of Conduct". Violations may result in the loss of Internet privileges. Internet conduct which has been specifically identified as unacceptable under Policy 5.1 includes, but is not limited to:

- Viewing illegal materials (obscenity, child pornography or materials harmful to minors).

As with other library materials and resources, restriction of a child's access to the Internet using a wireless connection is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

The Library's wireless network is not secure. Information sent to and from a notebook/laptop computer or other wireless device may be captured by anyone else with a wireless device and the appropriate software.

Library staff is not able to provide technical assistance in assisting patrons to access the wireless network.

NOLS assumes no responsibility for the safety of equipment or for notebook/laptop computer or other wireless device configurations, security, or data files resulting from connection to the Library's wireless access.

Access to printers is not available via the wireless connection.

Choosing and Evaluating Internet Links

In choosing Internet sources to link to from the NOLS webpage, the Library follows the materials selection guidelines set out in policies 2.1-2.6, "Collection Management." The Library is not responsible for subsequent changes in content of these linked sources, or for the content of sources accessed through secondary links.

Policy Subject to Revision

The Library's "Policy on Public Use of the Internet" may be revised from time to time as required.