



**INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE POLICY**

*Approved by the Library Advisory Board March 1, 2023*

<b>Internet and Computer Use Policy</b>	<b>1</b>
Mission Statement for Internet / Computer Use	1
Access to Internet Resources	1
Public Internet Stations: Conditions and Terms of Use in the Library	1-2
<b>Public Internet Stations: Responsibilities of Patrons</b>	<b>1</b>
Supervising Children’s Use	2
Choosing & Evaluating Sources	2
<b>Guideline for Computer / Internet Use</b>	<b>3</b>
Computers for Public Use at Bentonville Public Library	4

## Internet and Computer Use Policy

### Mission Statement for Internet/Computer Use

Internet/Computer access at the Bentonville Public Library is an extension of the library's commitment to meeting the community's information needs in an open and diversified format.

### Access to Internet Resources

- A. Throughout its history the Bentonville Public Library has made information available in a variety of formats, from print to audiovisual materials. The library's computer system provides the opportunity to integrate electronic resources, from information networks around the world, with the library's other resources.
- B. The Internet, as an information resource, enables the library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection. It allows access to global ideas, information, and commentary. Currently, however, it is an unregulated medium. As such, while it offers access to a wealth of material that is personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, it also enables access to some material that may be offensive, disturbing, or illegal.
- C. In introducing the Internet as an information resource, the Bentonville Public Library's goal is to enhance its existing collection in size and depth, and as a public access agency, give the opportunity to any patron who wishes to participate unassisted the Internet, both in the library and at home through remote services.
- D. Library staff will identify specific starting points for searches on the library's home page, which are appropriate to the library's mission and service roles. The library cannot control or monitor other material which may be accessible from Internet sources. It is not possible to apply the same selection criteria which are used for other materials.
- E. When feasible, the library will implement software and hardware control mechanisms to prohibit information whether Library has determined to be inconsistent with its Mission and service roles. Such controls will be implemented to the extent feasible given budgeting and programming limitations. The library cannot successfully control or monitor the vast amount of material accessible from computers and networks via the Internet. Individual patrons must accept responsibility for regulating content in the event the library is unable to determine its suitability.

### Public Internet Stations: Conditions and Terms of Use in the Library

To ensure that the use of this medium is consistent with the Mission of the Bentonville Public Library the following regulations shall apply:

- A. Designated computer/internet stations will be located where they can be monitored by staff for assistance and security.
- B. Patrons will show identification and sign a Library Computer Use agreement prior to using computers. Patrons under 18 years of age will be required to use "Family Friendly" computers which have a greater level of filtering.

- C. While the Library will make every effort to ensure that the use of the internet is consistent with the Mission statement, parents are encouraged to work closely with their children in selecting material that is consistent with personal and family values and boundaries.
- D. The library will establish procedures that will make internet stations available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- E. The Bentonville Public Library staff shall develop rules, time limits, and procedures as necessary to ensure the fair and reasonable use of electronic resources. These procedures are shared with patrons through hard copy handouts, on the library's website, and when patrons sign in to use a computer. All patrons must abide by the conditions and terms of these guidelines.
- F. Failure to use the computers and internet stations appropriately and responsibly, as defined in the library's policies, may result in suspension and/or loss of Library privileges.

### **Public Internet Stations: Responsibilities of Patrons**

#### **Supervising children's use**

- A. It is the library's policy that parents or legal guardians are responsible for deciding what library resources are appropriate for their children. Parents may feel some resources are inappropriate for their children. Parents should let their children know if there are materials that they do not want them to use. Parents should supervise their children's internet sessions.
- B. The library provides filtered internet access on public internet stations. Minors must use a "Family Friendly" computer.
- C. No filtering software can control access to all materials that an individual may deem inappropriate. Parents should instruct children in the Rules for Online Safety recommended by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

#### **Choosing and evaluating sources**

- A. The internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population and information content. Library patrons use it at their own risk.
- B. In choosing sources to link to our home page we follow generally accepted library practices. Beyond this, we do not monitor or control information accessible throughout the internet and do not accept responsibility for its content.
- C. As with printed information, not all sources on the internet provide accurate, complete, or current information. Patrons should evaluate internet sources just as they do printed publications, questioning the validity of the information provided.

### **Guidelines for Computer / Internet Use**

The following rules were established to ensure equitable access to the library's electronic resources. According to the Library's Computer Use Policy, all patrons are required to comply with these guidelines. Failure to do so will result in suspension or loss of library privileges.

The Bentonville Public Library staff reserves the right to end a computer session if the activity is causing a disruption of library services or if the behavior of the patron becomes inappropriate for a library setting.

- A. Incidents of inappropriate use should be reported to the Librarian on duty. The Librarian will follow established procedures to address the situation.
- B. Public displays of obscenity are prohibited by Arkansas State Law and are a clear violation of the Library's Computer Use Policy.
- C. Patrons must possess a valid and non-restricted Bentonville Public Library card.
- D. Temporary residents/visitors may register for computer/internet access. Temporary registration is valid for twelve (12) months and requires the presentation of a valid government-issued photo identification.
- E. If deemed appropriate by library administration, computer/internet access may be provided for one day and possibly subject to a cost-recovery fee.
- F. When accessing the computers, patrons must agree to follow the Library's Computer Use Policy and Guidelines for Computer Use.
- G. For the comfort and safety of our youngest patrons, parents/guardians with small children should utilize library technology in the Children's Department.
- H. Patrons must use their own library card when logging into the computers; utilizing another person's library card will result in staff terminating that computer session and may lead to confiscation of the library card and a documented incident. Repeat offenders are subject to having their library privileges restricted.
- I. Library staff may take the discretionary role of requiring the physical presence of the user's Library card to use computers.
- J. To fairly share computer resources, and meet public demand, patrons are allowed a designated time limit or session per day.
- K. Library staff may have the discretionary ability to allow patrons an additional session or additional time on the computers. Additionally, staff reserves the right to limit such additional services during peak hours.
- L. Game playing and participation in online chat or chat rooms and social media are all viewed as low-priority computer use. The library reserves the right to limit these activities, if necessary, to address the high demand for public computers.
- M. Cost-recovery fees for printing charges are charged by the Library. The Library's Fee and Fine Schedule is approved through the city ordinance. [Appendix A]
- N. The library's computers are set up for use by one patron. In some cases, however, it may be important for two patrons to work together on a single computer. Because of limited space,

a maximum of two patrons may work together at any one computer. Staff reserves the right to limit any computer to use by only one patron.

- O. Headphones must be used with the volume at a comfortable level that will not disturb other library patrons.
- P. Patrons may not alter or attempt to alter software configurations, install, or download software or files to the computers.
- Q. Patrons are responsible for damage to computer equipment or software.
- U. Library computers and internet access may not be used for any fraudulent or unlawful purpose. Any illegal activity involving the library's resources or equipment will be subject to prosecution by appropriate authorities.
- V. Computer incidents documented by library staff may require keeping specific records in paper or electronic format, with other supporting documentation as necessary. These records may remain on file for an undetermined period.
- W. All computers will be turned off approximately 5-15 minutes before closing.
- X. Beverages with lids are allowed at the computer terminals.
- Y. Patrons should use cell phones in a discrete manner while using computers.
- Z. Patrons utilizing the library's free wireless network, via their own personal laptop or electronic device, must also abide by the Library's Computer Guidelines. Staff may provide minimal assistance with patrons' personal devices.

### **Computers for public use at Bentonville Public Library**

- A. Family Friendly: [ages 5-17, Adult] Located in various locations throughout the library. The greater level of filtering protects children, and others, from possibly accessing inappropriate material.
- B. General Use: [ages 18+] Located in the main adult computer area of the library. Less filtering to allow for greater access to the broader range of material.
- C. Genealogy: [ages 18+] Located in the genealogy center, specifically for genealogy research. Less filtering to allow for greater access to the broader range of material.
- D. Additional innovative technologies and mobile devices, such as laptops, iPads, telescopes, and other items are available for use inside and checkouts outside the library. Technologies are available for various ages. In-library iPads are loaded with leveled educational apps and parental controls are turned on for devices in youth areas. Library agreements and specific procedures have been established to protect and secure these investments.
- E. Free wireless internet (WIFI) access is available throughout the library during regular business hours via patrons' own personal laptops or electronic devices. No time limit; minimal staff assistance. Although a library card is not required for WIFI service, internet, and computer policies regarding illegal and incidents of inappropriate use still apply to patrons' use of personal equipment when using the library's network.
- F. The City of Bentonville's Security Warning / Disclaimer applies to wireless access.
- G. Catalog terminals located throughout the library are for searching online library resources only. Accessing the internet is not allowed on catalog terminals.