
Purpose of Policy

Guide the public, staff, and Library Board on use of computers including wireless capability at Hennepin County Libraries, when accessing information through the Internet.

Internet Public Use Policy

Hennepin County Library provides public access to the Internet to fulfill, in part, the Library's mission of promoting full and equal access to information and ideas, the love of reading, the joy of learning, and engagement with the arts, sciences and humanities.

Hennepin County Library supports the right to privacy and confidentiality of Library customers in accordance with the Minnesota Data Practices Act. The content of the Internet is not managed or governed by any entity; therefore customers may encounter materials they consider offensive.

Parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring Internet access for their children ages 17 and under.

Hennepin County, Hennepin County Library, Hennepin County Library Board and its employees assume no responsibility for damages of any type arising from the use of Internet workstations.

Illegal use of the Internet is prohibited.

It is illegal for library customers to use the Library's Internet access to view, print, distribute, display, send or receive images, or graphics of material that violates laws relating to child pornography.

Library customers may not knowingly exhibit or display any material which is harmful to minors in its content or material that is obscene in any place of public accommodation where minors are or may be present and where minors are able to view the material.

Workstations are equipped with software that filters out pornography.

Minnesota Statutes 13.40 (Minnesota Data Practices Act); 134.50 (Internet access, libraries); 617.241 (Obscene material); 617.246 (Child pornography); 617.292 (Materials harmful to minors)



CHILDREN AND THE INTERNET

Library's Role

1. The Library provides assistance and information for library users to take advantage of the resources of the Internet. The Internet contains information on all subjects and from many viewpoints; not all sources provide information that is accurate, complete, or current and some may be offensive.
2. The Library offers Subject Guides as starting points for finding information in specific topic areas. Librarians have brought together relevant databases, authoritative websites, links into the library catalog, booklists, library classes, news and tips we feel will be of particular interest to Hennepin County Library customers. *Important Disclaimer: Websites in our Subject Guides are created and maintained by organizations and individuals throughout the world. Please note the Library cannot be responsible for the content, accuracy, or availability of these sites.*
3. The Library's website includes information on safety on the Internet for children and families. Ask a staff member for details.
4. Upon reasonable belief that a violation has occurred, library staff will enforce statutes that prohibit children and adults from viewing child pornography and obscenity and children from viewing material harmful to minors.

Parents' Responsibility

1. As with all materials in the Library, any restriction of a child's access to the Internet is the sole responsibility of the parent or legal guardian. Parents are encouraged to work with their children to develop rules for the use of the Internet.

Tips for Parents

1. Visit the Library often with your child.
2. The websites for kids selected by library staff and the KidLinks and TeenLinks workstations have been designed specifically for young people. Filtering software has been installed on these workstations. In addition, some other search engines allow users to select filtering options that restrict access to certain Internet sites.
3. Spend time online visiting sites with your child.
4. Discuss with your child any topics that may be off limits when they are on the Internet.
5. Tell your child never to give out identifying information, such as home address, telephone number, password, or school name.
6. Emphasize with your child to never arrange to meet in-person with strangers they talk to on the Internet.
7. Encourage your child to ask library staff for help in finding information on the Internet.

Comments are Always Welcome

Hennepin County Library contacts:
Local Library Manager
Amy Ryan, Library Director, director@hclib.org