

Dauphin County Library System, Harrisburg, PA
Internet Use Policy

CHOOSING AND EVALUATING SOURCES

The Dauphin County Library System (DCLS) assures patrons of all ages access to information in many formats, including the Internet. The Internet is a valuable information source, but some of the information is not accurate, complete, current, legal or philosophically acceptable to all citizens.

Internet users must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of information. DCLS is unable to control the content of Internet sites, which change frequently and unpredictably, and is not responsible for Internet content beyond the scope of its own web pages.

DCLS provides links to Internet sites on its web pages and in its catalog. DCLS does not officially endorse these sites, but links are provided to assist users in finding sites appropriate to age and topic.

INTERNET FILTERING

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Library has commercial filtering software on its computers. The filtering software is designed to protect against access to visual depictions defined as obscene, child pornography, and material that is harmful to minors, as required by law (see Appendix for definitions). The Library cannot and does not guarantee that filtering software will block such material, nor can the Library guarantee that the filters will not restrict access to sites with legitimate value.

Users who are 17 years of age or older may choose to have filtered or unfiltered Internet access. If a site is blocked while an adult user has selected "unfiltered" access, the adult user may request that library staff unblock a site per CIPA's language, only "to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purpose." If a site that contains visual depictions defined as obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors is not blocked by filters, the incident should be reported promptly to library staff.

ACCESS BY MINORS

Users 16 years of age and younger must use filtered access, in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act. If a parent/legal guardian and child use an adult terminal together, and the parent/legal guardian chooses unfiltered access, the child may use the terminal only while the parent/legal guardian is present.

The parents/legal guardians of minors are responsible for their children's use of the Library and its resources, including the Internet, and the Library will not act *in loco parentis*. Parents/legal guardians are the best and final judges of what is appropriate for their children and should guide their children in use of the Internet.

To assist parents/legal guardians with this important responsibility, the Library complies with the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (NCIPA) through these measures:

- Develops and maintains special web pages for children
- Provides information on using Library resources and the Internet in a safe and effective manner
- Urges parents/legal guardians to follow the safety guidelines for children on the DCLS website at <http://dcls.org/w/c/safe.html>

RULES GOVERNING USE

The Library may set limits and rules on the use of the Internet, including time limits, downloading of large files, and printing fees and options. The DCLS network and computers may not support certain file types available on the Internet, such as sound or moving images, IRC or telnet.

Altering DCLS computer hardware or software, network hacking, removing privacy screens, failure to pay for printing, and other activities that disrupt the library or its technology network are prohibited.

Patrons must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, including but not limited to criminal, copyright, privacy, defamation, and obscenity laws. The library system expressly prohibits any use of library computers for illegal activities, or to access material that contains or makes reference to explicit sexual materials and visual depictions as obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors (see Appendix).

Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in loss of access to the Internet, library computers, or general library privileges. A patron whose privileges have been denied may have that decision reviewed by the Board of Trustees by appealing the denial via written request to the Library Director within fourteen (14) days of the denial of library service.

PRIVACY

Patrons should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding patrons' activities. DCLS reserves the right to monitor patron use of the Internet if there is a suspected violation of this or other library policy. DCLS will not release any information on patrons' Internet use except as required by law or necessary for the proper operation of the Library.

Internet computers are equipped with individual privacy screens, but they do not completely prevent others from seeing what is displayed. Patrons should remain sensitive to the fact that people of all ages are able to view the content being displayed.

Approved by Board of Trustees September 19, 2006

**APPENDIX TO DAUPHIN COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM INTERNET
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

Definition of “obscene” 18 Pa. C.S. § 5903

1. The average person applying contemporary community standards would find that the subject matter taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest;
2. The subject matter depicts or describes in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct of a type described in this section;
3. The subject matter, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, educational or scientific value.

Definition of “harmful to minors” 18 Pa. C.S. § 5903

Harmful to minors means that quality of any description or representation, in whatever form, of nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sadomasochistic abuse, when it:

- i. predominantly appeals to the prurient, shameful or morbid interest of minors;
- ii. is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable materials for minors; and
- iii. taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, educational or scientific value for minors