Internet and Computer Use Policy

Purpose and general policies

The mission of the Bozeman Public Library ("Library") is to develop and provide resources and services that meet the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of our community. To meet this goal, the Library endeavors to provide open Internet access for all Library users through Library computers connected to the Internet and through wireless Internet access during the Library's open hours.

The Internet offers access to a multitude of valuable resources, but some may be inaccurate, incomplete, dated, disturbing or personally offensive. The Library does not monitor and has no control over the information accessed and cannot be held responsible for the content of sites accessed. Internet users are responsible for evaluating the accuracy of material found on the Internet. The Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through the Internet.

The Library strives to provide Internet access at all times the Library is open, but downtimes do occasionally occur, and will be announced in advance when possible.

Any person with a valid Library card in good standing may access the Library's public computers. The Library employs antivirus software, but it cannot warrant that its website, server, or any other website accessed by Internet users is free of viruses or other harmful components.

Using the Library's public computers and wireless network

This policy applies to all use of the Library's wired or wireless Internet service, whether on privately-owned devices or Library-provided devices. Patrons are individually responsible for their own access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet. The Library is not responsible for the security of personal information or other data shared on or with non-Library sites.

Use guidelines and prohibitions

All users on the Internet stations or the wireless network are expected to use these resources in a legal and courteous manner. Users should be aware that they are working in a public environment, and are asked to consider this when accessing potentially controversial information and images.

Prohibited uses of the Library's computer resources include but may not be limited to:

- Using public computers and personal devices in a manner that unreasonably interferes with another Patron's use of the Library, such as by playing videos or music at an unreasonable volume or accessing sites that produce unreasonably loud music or other sounds.
- Failure to follow posted Library rules for use of public computers and wireless networks, including time limits, printing policies, and use of headphones.
- Using the Library card information of another person, including a relative, to access the Library's computer resources.
- Use of Library equipment or computer networks to access obscene material or child pornography.

Internet use by minors

As with other Library materials, a minor's use of the Internet is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. A minor is anyone less than 18 years of age, in accordance with **Montana Code - Annotated Section 41-1-101**. Parents or legal guardians who wish to restrict their minor's library card for computer access must sign a form authorizing the Library to block computer access for that library card.

Minors should not reveal personal information without parental or guardian permission when accessing the Internet, using email, or engaging in chat room activities. Parents, guardians and caregivers are expected to instruct minors how to safely guard their personal information.

Illegal uses prohibited

Patrons are prohibited from using the Internet in a manner that violates any local, state, or federal law. Such criminal activities include, but are not limited to:

- Purposely or knowingly publishing, exhibiting, displaying or otherwise making available obscene material to minors in violation of **Montana Code Annotated Section 45-8-201 and/or 45-8-206**.
- Violating software licensing agreements.
- Violating copyright laws. Except as permitted by fair use or other copyright exemptions, Patrons may not reproduce, display, or distribute copyrighted materials.
- Using the Library computers or the Internet for purposes of abuse, harassment, violations of privacy or intimidation.
- Attempting to disable, damage, degrade performance of or gain unauthorized access to the library's or other computer systems and networks.
- Damaging or tampering with equipment, software or data belonging to the Library or other users.

Internet filtering software

The Internet is a valuable resource containing vast amounts of useful information. Unfortunately, it also contains sites that are potentially offensive and/or harmful to Library Patrons.

Due to the nature of filtering software, they may inadvertently block constitutionally protected material, while also failing to block certain content the software claims to filter. Unintentionally blocked sites may contain valid and valuable information.

Therefore, the Library follows the recommendations of the American Library Association (ALA) when it comes to Internet filtering, and does not use filters on the Library's public computers.

Parents, guardians and caretakers of minors may wish to research the search filters available on many Internet search engines. One such option is the "SafeSearch" setting on Google's search engine.

Penalties for violations of this policy; appeals

Violation of any part of this policy may result in loss of Internet and Library computer privileges, loss of Library privileges, and/or criminal prosecution in accordance with the Library Behavior Policy, available online and in hard copy in the Library. The Library Behavior Policy provides a procedure for Patrons to appeal such penalties.