

## **Acceptable Use Policy for Public Access Computers**

### **Staying within the law**

You may only use library computers for lawful purposes. There is a summary of some relevant legislation towards the end of this document. If you misuse the computers in any way, you may be banned from using library computers and / or from using Devon libraries, and you could risk prosecution. You may be asked to supply or confirm your current address so that we can inform you and Devon library staff of any action taken.

### **Misuse includes:**

- Attempting to alter, damage or destroy the libraries' standard desktop system, or any software or data held on library computers or networks.
- Introducing or attempting to introduce a computer virus onto library computers.
- Re-publishing downloaded data in contravention of copyright legislation.
- Writing on screen or printing anything that may be considered offensive, pornographic or threatening.
- Viewing, downloading or printing pornographic images or text.
- Sending message or posting material on the Internet via means such as blogs / wikis / social networking sites, that may be considered to contain anything offensive, pornographic, or threatening, including any form of racial, sexual, or religious harassment or incitement.
- Damaging or attempting to damage the computer equipment.
- Viewing or sharing illegal information.
- Using someone else's library ticket number to access a computer.

Use of the Internet and email services (but not the content of emails) is recorded, and sites visited, and users can be identified. Libraries Unlimited reserves the right to inspect files when investigating suspected misuse and share information with the police or other relevant authorities to support their own investigation.

### **Filtering**

All access to the Internet in libraries is filtered but we cannot guarantee that all offensive sites will be blocked. Equally, some acceptable sites may be incorrectly blocked. What may be acceptable or unacceptable to one person may not be to another, but if you find a site which you think should be blocked or unblocked, please inform a member of library staff. Libraries Unlimited will decide on what action to take.

### **Young people**

All young people can have access to a computer but Internet access is not available to very young children (0 - 5) or to children under 12 unless they have consent from their parent / guardian / legal carer (see below).

A young person, age 12 and under, whose parent / guardian / legal carer has given their consent to library staff, may have access to the Internet using the Library Services' Filtered access. A much wider range of websites is blocked than for adults. Sites that offer help and information on social issues such as drug use and abortion are not blocked, but those that seek to promote or glorify drug use are. There is no access to email or chatrooms, though some websites do allow messages to be sent from within the sites. This is also the default access for 13 - 15 year olds without parental consent.

A young person aged 13 - 15 whose parent / guardian / legal carer has signed an Internet Consent Form in the presence of library staff or given verbal permission to a member of staff, may have access to the Internet using the Library Services' Full access (adult level). A young person who is accompanied by a responsible adult while they are using the computer may have full internet access at the adult filtered level.

Please note that library staff are not responsible for supervising young people's use of library computers.

### **Retaining your work**

If you wish to retain your work, please save it to a USB drive or other external device. Do not try to save your work on the computer hard drive: it may be temporarily available to other users, and it will be erased regularly. Libraries Unlimited does not accept responsibility for any virus downloaded from the Internet onto an external storage device, or for any subsequent damage to users' home PCs caused by such a download, or for loss or damage to material.

### **Availability of service**

Technical or other problems may sometimes prevent access to the computer service. Libraries Unlimited cannot accept responsibility for computers being slow or not available, or for any failure beyond its control.

### **Confidentiality / privacy of personal information**

Because library computers are available to all members of the public, we cannot guarantee the privacy / accessibility of any personal data, including email messages. We advise you not to send confidential or sensitive personal information by email or via the Internet, and we recommend that you leave secure sites as directed and exit the Internet browser at the end of your session. If you choose to use credit or debit cards to purchase goods or services via the Internet, you do so at your own risk.

### **Information provided via the Internet**

Libraries Unlimited has no control over information provided on the Internet, and is not responsible for the availability, content, quality or accuracy of such information.

## Consideration for others

Please:

- Show consideration for others by being quiet when using library computers, and do not use your mobile phone. Disruptive use, such as for group game playing, is not permitted.
- Respect other people's privacy and do not look at computer screens that are being used by others.
- Use headphones if you want to listen to audio material. Headphones can be purchased from the library, or you can use your own. You may use the library's "for hire" DVDs and audio CDs only if you have paid the hire charge first.

## Health and Safety

Advice on using computers safely is provided via posters in libraries and is included at Appendix 2 towards the end of this policy statement. Libraries Unlimited does not accept responsibility for any health problems that are alleged to have arisen as a result of using library computers.

## Appendix 1: Legislation

The following legislation applies to the Internet:

- **Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and Obscene Publications Act 1959**
  - You may not use library computers to view, read, download, upload, distribute, circulate or sell any material which is pornographic, obscene, racist, sexist, grossly offensive or violent, even if it is legal in the country of origin.
- **Computer Misuse Act 1990**

It is a criminal offence to:

  - Gain unauthorised access to any program or data held in a computer (computer hacking).
  - Use hacking skills to commit other crimes.
  - Alter data or cause changes to any software without authority and with malevolent intent. This includes the writing or intentional introduction of computer viruses.
- **The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988**

You must obtain the permission of the owner of intellectual property before copying or making use of it. You should assume that all material on the Internet is subject to copyright unless a specific notice states otherwise. Copying includes downloading files or images or copying text into or attaching it to an email message.
- **Data Protection Act 2018**

This Act applies to obtaining, using and publishing information about identifiable individuals on the Internet. You must ensure that:

  - You obtain the consent of individuals before information (including photographs, video images, names or email addresses) about them is published or disclosed via the Internet. This is not required if the information has been released into the public

domain by the individual, for example names of book authors in libraries, or is required by law to be made public, for example planning applications. However, individuals should be informed about how their information will be disclosed.

- Published information is accurate, relevant, not excessive, kept up to date and not held for longer than necessary.
- Any information you obtain or publish is appropriately notified under the Act.

There is more information on the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner's website at [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk).

- **Defamation Act 1996**

It is unlawful to make an untrue statement, published to a third party, which damages the reputation of a person or company or holds them up to hatred, ridicule or contempt. It need not be obviously insulting. It could, for example, be a suggestion that a competitor is in financial difficulties or is unprofessional in the conduct of its business. Facts concerning individuals or organisations must be accurate and verifiable and views or opinions must not portray their subjects in any way that could damage their reputation.

- **Sexual/Racial/Disability Harassment**

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 make it an offence to discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or disability (or perceived disability). Harassment, such as unwelcome emails or copying of such material from the Internet, is not permitted and could result in legal action against you.

## **Appendix 2: Advice on using computers safely**

### **For your safety and comfort, please:**

- Adjust the height of your chair so that your lower arms are horizontal and your eyes are level with the top of the screen. Your feet should rest on the floor
- Adjust the backrest so that it supports your lower back
- Make sure the keyboard is tilted (use the legs under its back)
- Don't bend your wrists upwards
- Position the mouse so that it is within easy reach
- If there is reflected glare from windows or lights, tilt or twist the screen
- Use the controls beneath the screen to adjust the brightness and contrast if the image is not clear enough
- Try to relax, and type gently
- Don't sit in one position for too long, and look away from the screen to vary your focus. Take short regular breaks

### **Please tell staff if:**

- You cannot avoid glare on the screen
- The screen flickers or the characters move
- You notice any hazards such as trailing wires or the screen needs cleaning