

## **6.003 INTERNET ACCESS POLICY**

### **I. SERVICE OBJECTIVES**

In accordance with the mission of the Arlington Heights Memorial Library, access to the Internet is provided for users to support and aid the legitimate reference, lifelong learning, scientific, educational and recreational needs of the community. The objectives of this service are: to provide expeditious access to the Internet's rich and vast array of resources; to link the Library with other organizations and institutions in providing a community information network; and to provide direct access to a variety of subscribed databases and the Library's Web site. Because the nature of the Internet and technology in the public library is evolutionary, guidelines and procedures are developed and modified when necessary, using the principles outlined in this policy to assure equitable access to Internet resources.

### **II. SERVICE DESCRIPTION**

For user convenience, access to the Internet is provided at designated workstations throughout the Library. Computers are located in proximity to public service desks so that staff can provide assistance. The public workstations are made available on a first come, first served basis, subject to procedural guidelines. The Library staff is trained to answer questions about navigating the Internet and basic Internet functions. Individualized instruction is offered in Library-sponsored classes and by computer volunteers when available. Access to the Internet may be affected from time to time by technological or telecommunications problems beyond the Library's control or for planned service upgrades.

### **III. INTERNET FUNCTIONS**

While the Internet can be used for a variety of purposes, the Library actively supports only those functions that relate to its mission and services. Software, tools, settings and upgrades are selected that relate to those functions. The Library strives to provide functionality that is current and user-friendly, enables effective access to a wide variety of Web sites, and makes the best use of the Library's computing resources. While many users can access their personal email accounts at the Internet workstations, the Library does not formally support this function.

### **IV. PRIVACY AND SECURITY ON THE INTERNET**

In keeping with Library policies and state and federal laws, the Arlington Heights Memorial Library protects users' rights to privacy and confidentiality of their library records. The Library avoids collecting or maintaining records that could compromise the privacy of users. Electronic communication by its nature may not be secure, however, and networks are sometimes compromised. The Library cannot guarantee security in any online transactions. Additionally, Internet workstations are located in public areas, where others might view screens. Privacy screens are in place on all monitors. It is the responsibility of each user to judge if a Web site provides

sufficient security for the user's needs, particularly in confidential online transactions. Users should exercise caution when using the Internet to avoid unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information.

## V. INTERNET CONTENTS

While the Internet provides many valuable resources, users must recognize that some information available via the Internet may be considered offensive, disturbing, or may be illegal. Not all electronic information is accurate, complete, or current. Users need to be informed consumers, carefully evaluating information found on the Internet.

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the rights of citizens from governmental intrusion in what they see, hear, view, and read. It also applies to citizens accessing information on the Internet at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library. As a result, workstations in most areas of the building do not have filtering software.

## VI. SERVICE TO MINORS

While all the provisions of this policy pertain to minors, there are additional considerations for Internet service to children under the age of eighteen. Parents and legal guardians of minors are responsible for determining the limits of their children's access to the Internet and providing guidance to them. Since email and chat services are available to all computer users, it is important for parents to discuss issues regarding Internet safety, sharing personal information and privacy with their children. Information about Internet safety is provided on the Kids' World web pages.

Because children of any age may use any of the Library's Internet workstations, parents should direct their children's use of the Internet accordingly. Parents have the option of restricting their children under the age of twelve to filtered Internet access only.

In order to provide an option for families, the Kids' World workstations are filtered to limit access to known sexually explicit material. Even with such filtering software in place, the Library cannot guarantee the appropriateness of material on the Internet for any particular age group.

## VII. USER RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure fair and proper use of the Library's computing resources, users must be legally and ethically responsible in their behavior.

## VIII. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Internet access may be used only for legal purposes. Examples of illegal use include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Attempting to change or damage computer equipment, software settings, or files belonging to the Arlington Heights Memorial Library, other users, or external networks and Web sites.

- B. Attempting, or assisting to attempt, unauthorized access to any Arlington Heights Memorial Library computer system, any other network or external system.
- C. Violation of copyright laws.
- D. Violation of software license agreements.
- E. Unlawful communications, such as threats of violence, obscenity, child pornography, and harassing communications as defined by law.
- F. Intentional propagation of computer viruses.

#### IX. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Each user has the responsibility of using the Internet ethically. Examples of unethical use include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Computer use in ways that interfere with or impede the use by others, such as deliberately crashing a computer, consuming large amounts of system resources, locking out files, or any other type of interference with system operations, whether deliberate or not.
- b. Violation of another user's privacy.
- c. Disregard or violation of Library policies and procedures dealing with computers and electronic access.
- d. Unauthorized use of computer accounts or access codes assigned to others.

#### X. POLICY ENFORCEMENT

An individual who does not fulfill the user responsibilities is considered in violation of the Library's behavior policy. The user's Internet access or use of the Library may be suspended for a specific time period, according to Library policy. An individual who uses the Internet for illegal purposes may also be subject to prosecution.