Internet Use

The Great Falls Public Library offers access to the Internet in the belief that it is a vital information source. The library's connection to the Internet is provided to the public without charge.

The Internet is a freely accessible and largely unregulated resource. While the vast majority of sites on the World Wide Web are neutral arenas for information exchange, a small percentage of sites may contain material that might prove offensive to some users. The Library assumes no control over the content of material on the Internet. Some information accessed through the Internet may not meet the Great Falls Public Library collection development policy guidelines. It is left to each user to determine what is appropriate.

There is often more accurate and comprehensive material available in the form of books, periodicals, electronic databases and other materials. Patrons are encouraged to ask staff for help and advice in locating the best sources of information.

- Any person with a valid Great Falls Public Library card in good standing automatically has access to the library's public computers and the Internet. Parents who wish to restrict their minor child's library card for computer access must sign a form authorizing the library to block computer access for that library card. Parents who are concerned about their children's use of the Internet should provide guidance for their own children.

- Because the Internet workstations are located in public areas that are shared by library users of all ages, backgrounds and sensibilities, individuals are asked to consider this when accessing potentially controversial information and images.

- Access to materials which are child pornography, obscene, or harmful to minors is prohibited.

- Any illegal activity, including copyright violation and illegal or unauthorized entry into computer files or programs prohibited.

- Using Great Falls Public Library computers for purposes that may be interpreted as abuse, harassment or intimidation is prohibited.

- Minors should not reveal personal information without parental or guardian permission when accessing the Internet, using e-mail, or engaging in chat room activities.

- Users may send and receive e-mail, but the library does not provide or regulate accounts. Free e-mail services are available from many sources on the Internet. Information on these services is available at the Information Desk. Given the nature of the Internet and e-mail, confidentiality cannot be assured.

- Library staff is able to offer only minimal assistance in accessing the Internet.

- Saving to library computer hard drives is not allowed, but patrons may save to ~~a~~ floppy disks, CDs or USB drives. Disks and CDs are available at the Information Desk for a nominal charge.

- Users may print from library computers. Printouts can be picked up at the Information Desk for a nominal charge.

Filters

The Internet is a dynamic resource containing vast amounts of information and a small percentage of potentially offensive sites. Due to the nature of the way filters operate, there currently is no filter which does not inadvertently block Constitutionally protected material. Many of these unintentionally blocked sites contain valid and valuable information. Nor do filters block all potentially offensive sites.

Therefore, Great Falls Public Library does not use filters for Internet stations located in the non-fiction area. However, if a patron wishes to use a filter, many Internet search engines offer filtered searching as an option.

Wireless Internet Access

The library offers free wireless Internet access to patrons with wireless-enabled laptops or handheld devices.

- Users are responsible for the configuration of their own equipment. Great Falls Public Library staff will not provide any assistance or recommendations regarding configuring or troubleshooting equipment

- No printing services are available

- Audio output must be muted or directed to headphones

- A wireless connection is less secure than a wired connection. Users are responsible for understanding the risks. Great Falls Public Library does not assure the security of data when using any of the publicly available PCs or the wireless network

- Any activity that violates library policy regarding library-owned computers is also prohibited on user-owned equipment that is connected to the wireless network.

Violation of any part of this policy may result in loss of Internet and library computer privileges.