



INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE POLICY

Purpose

In keeping with its mission and with advances in information technology, the Hamden Public Library provides users with access to the Internet and public computers. The Library provides these to support the education and information needs of the community. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete, or current information. The Library has no control over the information on the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content or quality.

Users are cautioned that ideas, points of view and images can be found on the Internet which are controversial, divergent and inflammatory. The provision of access does not mean to imply that the Library endorses or sanctions the content or point of view of any of the information or commentary which may be found on the Internet. Furthermore, because access points on the Internet change, the Library cannot protect individuals from information and images which they might find offensive or disturbing.

Use of Library computers implies consent to follow the Responsibilities of Users as outline in this policy.

Responsibilities of the Library

Function and Assistance - The Library, working with the Town of Hamden's Information Technology department, strives to maintain Internet access via Library computers, networks, and wireless access at all times the Library is open. When these services are not available, the Library will make every effort to announce such downtimes in advance.

Library staff primarily assist with research on the Internet. If time permits, staff may assist users with Library computers, printers, Library software, and general Internet use.

Library staff may be able to assist users with laptops, phones, e-readers or other wireless devices or answer software questions. Library staff also may direct users to Library resources, Internet resources, or training classes that can help users explore software or wireless devices.

Privacy - Computer use information, as well as Library cardholder information, is confidential. All files are removed and Internet search history is deleted from Library computers at the end of each day.

Filtering - In compliance with Child Internet Protection Act/CIPA, the Library, the town of Hamden's Information Technology Department, filters all its computers, and all access to the Internet through its network, to protect against access to obscene visual depictions, child pornography, and/or other material harmful to minors, as required by law. The filter may unintentionally block sites that have legitimate research value and fail to block objectionable content. Users should be aware that Internet filtering software installed for CIPA compliance should not substitute for individual judgment and/or parental involvement and oversight.

As the law requires, the Library will disable filtered Internet access to persons 17 or older who request it for bona fide research or any other lawful purposes.

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Library's network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes:

- Unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and

- Dissemination and viewing of obscene visual depictions, child pornography, and/or other materials harmful to minors.

Wireless Services – Through the Town of the Hamden’s Information Technology Department, The Hamden Public Library provides free wireless Internet access to users with appropriately equipped and configured devices. The Library cannot guarantee that all patron equipment will work with our wireless network. Library staff cannot supply technical support or troubleshooting if your equipment does not work with the Library wireless service. The Library’s wireless network is not secure. The Library is not responsible for any changes users make to their computers in order to use the Library wireless service. The Library assumes no responsibility for the security or safety of computer equipment brought into the library, and users must keep their equipment with them at all times.

Responsibilities of Users

Shared Environment - Users should be aware that they are working in a public environment shared by people of all ages and sensibilities. Since staff cannot consistently and effectively monitor the public’s use of the Internet, individuals are asked to be sensitive of other’s values and beliefs when displaying potentially controversial information or images on public computer screens. The Library affirms and acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of parents and caregivers to monitor and determine their children’s access to Library materials and resources, including those available through the Internet.

Courteous Use - All users of the Internet are expected to use this Library resource in a responsible and courteous way, consistent with the purposes for which it is provided, and follow all Internet-related rules, regulations and procedures established for its use including, but not limited to, those of the Library. Responsible, courteous use of the Internet includes:

- Recognizing that the Internet, like all Library information sources, must be shared and used in a manner which respects the rights of others and avoids activities that prevent others from using it. Time limits are observed for this purpose and extensions of time may not be possible during peak demand.
- Computer users are required to use sound-muffling headphones or mute sound to avoid disturbing others. Headphones can be borrowed from the information desk. Earbuds may be purchased for a small fee from the Borrower Services Desk.
- Respecting the privacy of others by not misrepresenting oneself as another user.
- Exercising caution in sharing personal information (name, address, password, telephone number, school or work, credit card number, etc.) on the Internet. This includes but is not limited to email, instant messaging, online purchasing, social media sites, and commercial sites. The Library's Internet networks are unsecure; the security of personal information shared on or with non-Library sites cannot be guaranteed.
- Computer users must use the Internet at their own risk, realizing that they may encounter material they find offensive.
- No more than two people may share a computer terminal
- Food and beverages may not be consumed at Library computer terminals.

Data and Software - Users must save their work to their own formatted storage medium such as a USB flash drive. Flash drives are available for purchase at the Borrower Services Desk. Work cannot be saved to the computer hard drive. The Library is not responsible for any lost or damaged work on a flash drive or other storage medium.

Only Library provided software may be employed. Users may not alter or damage hardware, software or data or in any way interfere with, disrupt or degrade the network.

Legal Use - People may only use the Library's computers and networks for legal purposes. Violations listed below may result in suspension or loss of the privilege to use these resources. Illegal uses of the library's computers or wireless networks may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities. Illegal and unacceptable uses include:

- Harassment of other users or violation of their privacy.
- Libeling, slandering or maliciously offending other users.
- Violation of software licensing agreements.
- Overuse of system resources such as bandwidth.
- Attempting to crash, degrade performance of or gain unauthorized access to the Library's or other computer systems and networks.
- Damaging equipment, software or data belonging to the Library or other users.
- Any attempt to:
 - view, print, distribute, display and or receive materials that violate laws relating to child pornography.
 - disseminate, exhibit, display, send or receive materials that are harmful to minors.
 - view, print, distribute, and send material that is "obscene" under the community standards of CT Public Act 04-139.
- Copyright Infringement, including downloading and distributing unauthorized copies of copyrighted motion pictures or songs.

It is illegal for Library patrons to use Library services to view, print, distribute, display, or send or receive images, text or graphics that violate laws relating to child pornography; any such action will be reported to the proper authorities.

Child Safety on the Internet - The Library supports the right of each family to determine appropriate Internet use for their children and teens. Use of the Internet presents an opportunity for each family to discuss sites and content they feel is appropriate or inappropriate. Responsibility for, and any restrictions of, a child's use of the Internet rests solely with his or her parents, caregivers, or legal guardians.

Computers in the children's area are for use by children up to age 14. Computers in the teen area are for the use of teens in grades six through twelve.

Library patrons shall not use the Internet to view, print, distribute, display, send or receive images, text or graphics of obscene materials or materials that are harmful to minors. Library personnel may monitor patrons' use of the Internet to assure that Library policies and procedures are being upheld. Failure to comply with this section will result in patrons being asked to leave the premises. Repeat offenders may be suspended and/or barred from the Library.