

Pollard Memorial Library Guide to Public Use of the Internet

The Pollard Memorial Library ("PML"), through its access provider(s), the *Merrimack Valley Library Consortium* ("MVLC") and *Comcast, Inc.*, offer limited public access to the Internet.

The Pollard Memorial Library will provide access to the Internet for library patrons during regular library hours. The intended use of Internet in the library is as a reference tool. This resource enhances and often goes beyond those that are locally available. The Internet is an unregulated global entity which is highly diverse and ever-changing. By providing access to it, the library is opening a gateway to information broader than its traditional practice of selecting materials and specific services. Users are encouraged to take advantage of the Internet and to exercise good judgment and discretion in their use of it.

The library staff is always available to provide suggestions and strategies to help patrons with their searches. As always, your ideas, comments, and sharing of knowledge with us are welcomed.

There are special restrictions that apply to Level 3 Sex Offenders using the Library's equipment and Internet access. Per City of Lowell Ordinance §222-13, Library Child Safety Ordinance, Level 3 Sex Offenders may only use filtered computers. If you need assistance to determine which computers are filtered, please speak with the library staff.

Filtering

The library provides a mix of filtered and unfiltered Internet workstations. The Library has implemented software filtering on public Internet-accessible computer terminals. Users should be aware, however, that all currently available filtering software results in a degree of both "underblocking" (i.e., permitting access to certain material that falls within the foregoing categories) and "overblocking" (i.e., denying access to certain constitutionally protected material that does not fall within the foregoing categories). The Library cannot and does not guarantee that the filtering software will block all that violates local, state, or federal law or materials that are harmful to minors. Nor can the Library guarantee that the filtering software will not restrict access to sites that may have legitimate research or other value

Before using PML Internet services, users should be aware of the following:

- Before accessing an Internet workstation, users must read and agree to the Pollard Memorial Library computer policy that the Internet may contain controversial or sexually explicit, or pornographic material which some may find offensive or inappropriate;
- that the Internet may contain information that is of a mature nature and may not be suitable for minors;
- that the Internet may contain information that is inaccurate or incomplete;
- that use of a filtering program on a workstation may not block access to all objectionable sites; conversely it may block access to useful informational sites;
- that all users, depending on availability, will have the choice of using a filtered/unfiltered workstation.
- PML, in offering limited public access to the Internet, serves solely as a connection to the Internet system. Unlike other material within PML's collection, the library has no control over the availability of information links and the content of information retrieved

- which the provider or user may consider to be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, racist or otherwise objectionable.
- The library reserves the right to limit internet use time
 - Whether using a library computer, a personal laptop, or any other electronic device which can access the Library's WIFI signal, patrons are expected to refrain from displaying graphics which are inappropriate for public viewing.

PML's Rules and Regulations for Public Internet Use

(Comcast Network) The Pollard Memorial Library ("PML"), through its access provider, Comcast, is offering limited public access to the Internet. You may plug your external storage devices (MP3 players, IPODs, etc.) into the public computers on this floor to download data. Please use the USB ports in the front of the tower. We reserve the right to deny this service if too many patrons wish to download at the same time.

(MVLC Network) You may not plug external storage devices (MP3 players, IPODs, etc.) into our computers on this floor. You may use the computers on the first floor or ground floor to download data to your devices.

Examples of prohibited uses of PML equipment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) attempting to, or gaining access to any materials which is deemed unlawful by statute or court determination;
- b) Patrons shall not engage in any illegal activities on the Internet.
- c) Patrons shall not access materials that are declared pornography, child pornography and/or harmful to minors.
- d) Patrons should be warned against disclosing personal information, such as name, school, address and telephone numbers to strangers on the Internet.
- e) damaging or altering software components of network or database;
- f) attempting to, or gaining unauthorized access to files, passwords, data, etc.;
- g) unauthorized use including, but not limited to, the copying of copyright protected material;
- h) destruction or damage to equipment, software, or data;
- i) attempting to, or providing an unauthorized user with access to the Internet;
- j) violating in any way the licensing agreements of software and/or databases that PML may have or
- k) unauthorized downloading of information to a workstation's hard drive.

Violations

Violations of the rules and regulations contained herein, as well as other PML rules and regulations, and any and all applicable provisions of local, state, and federal law(s) shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Any violations of PML rules and regulations may, after a hearing on the matter, result in a loss of Internet and/or library privileges. Users, whose Internet and/or library privileges are revoked, may contest the revocation by appealing, in writing, to the PML Board of Trustees.

Public Users' Security

Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding users' activities. However, the Pollard Memorial Library will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law or necessary for the proper operation of the Library.

Compliance

The Library reserves the right to take appropriate action to insure compliance with this policy. Library trustees and staff will continue to evaluate our Internet policies and procedures for children and adults and make modifications as needed to insure equitable and safe access for all. Violations may result in revocation of computer privileges. Unlawful activities will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Access by Minors

The Children's Department will provide Internet access to children ages 12 and under. A menu will be displayed on the introductory screen which connects the user to Internet sites specifically designed for children. The Internet is an ever changing source of information and not all sites are accurate or current. Many sites are inappropriate for children, and therefore parents are encouraged to come to the library and use the Internet with their children. Ultimate responsibility for how children use the Internet is a matter for parents and their children to decide.

As with the computers in the rest of the building, the library will not tolerate use of its computers and network in a way that violates local, state, or federal law. Whether using a library computer or a personal laptop, children are expected to refrain from displaying graphics which are inappropriate for public viewing

To address the issue of access by minors to inappropriate material on the Internet, including material that is harmful to minors, the Library:

- Provides filtered workstations
- Develops and maintains special web sites for children and teens;
- Distributes a publication entitled "A Safety Net for the Internet: A Parent's Guide"

No child under the age of 13 will be allowed to use the unfiltered workstations without a parent or guardian present. Parents are encouraged to come to the library and use the Internet with their children.

This policy is subject to review by the Pollard Memorial Library Board of Trustees.

Adopted September 10, 1996

Revised June 16, 1999

Revised May 14, 2002

Revised March 7, 2007

Revised November 2, 2011