



# Northborough Free Library

34 Main Street

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Phone: (508) 393-5025

<http://www.northboroughlibrary.org>

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## **POLICY FOR PUBLIC USE OF COMPUTERS AND INTERNET**

In order to provide citizens with the computing tools they require and access to the information available via the World Wide Web, the Northborough Free Library provides computers equipped with productivity software and Internet access.

### **Internet**

The library does not control, endorse, filter, or monitor the information on the Internet for either content or accuracy. The individual user is the ultimate judge of the appropriateness and value of materials and information accessed via the Internet. In consideration of the fact that the terminals are in plain sight, however, the viewing of sexually explicit or gruesome materials is not allowed and will result in a loss of computer privileges. Furthermore, patrons using the library's Internet for unethical or illegal use will have their privileges revoked. Such use may include but is not limited to:

- Harassment of others either on-site or remotely.
- Destruction or damage of data or equipment.
- Unauthorized copying of copyright-protected materials.
- Violation of software license agreements.
- Unauthorized use of other users' or entities' protected information (hacking).
- Violation of computer security.

### **Children**

The computers in the Children's Room are for the use of children age 11 and under and their parents and caregivers. The responsibility of judging the appropriateness of information or services on library terminals belongs to parents/guardians. *The children's computers are not filtered for content.* The library recommends that parents/guardians participate in their children's computer use and discuss online safety with them:

- Personal information such as name, address, school name, or telephone number should never be given.
- People online may not be who they say they are.
- Never arrange to meet someone met online.
- Just because it is online doesn't mean it is true.
- Some sites contain material that is sexual, violent, or otherwise not appropriate for viewing at the library's terminals.
- Report to library staff or a parent/guardian any message or site that is suggestive, obscene, threatening, or making you feel uncomfortable.

## **Hardware and Software**

To ensure continued availability of the public computers, the library takes security measures that protect the computers from malicious software (viruses) as well as physical threats:

- Each terminal is set to a default image. Every time a computer is restarted, it resets back to that default image, deleting all files and settings that may have been changed.
- If a computer is idle for 15 minutes, it will restart.
- Adding any programs or altering any existing programs is prohibited.
- Attaching personal hardware or accessories to computers that require changing software configurations, altering settings, or downloading/installing additional drivers is also prohibited.

Since the library does not offer storage, patrons are advised to frequently save their projects on a private storage medium such as a flash drive, cloud service, or e-mail. The library is an information hub, not a business office. As such, library terminals are intended for browsing, personal productivity, communication and recreation. In order to protect the machines from unintended and/or excessive use and ensure a distraction-free computing environment for all patrons, the library staff reserves the right to limit an individual's use of library hardware, including but not limited to printers, copiers, headphones, speakers, and the terminals themselves. The library charges for each print-out made. Patrons must pay for all printouts prior to using a computer station again, or risk losing computer privileges.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

While the library's security measures attempt to protect patron privacy by erasing temporary data, *sometimes systems fail*. Patrons are advised to take responsibility for their own confidentiality by logging out of services and deleting files they have been using, especially if they contain sensitive personal information. Patrons should never click on "remember my password," "keep me logged in," or any similar prompt. Nor should patrons walk away from a computer with private information open or important work unsaved. The library does not keep any records of computer activities, but must comply with the USA Patriot Act and any other legislation in which a search warrant or court order is lawfully obtained.

## **Staff Assistance**

Librarians at Northborough Free Library aim to enable patrons to better use technological and information resources. Library staff can provide general guidance on the use of library computer systems and the Internet, but will not perform the patron's personal work or do the browsing for them. The library staff typically cannot advise on problems with specific websites, services, programs, e-mail accounts, or other applications other than suggesting possible sources for answers and instruction. Nor can the library staff typically sit down and offer detailed instruction to patrons completely unfamiliar with the hardware or software they are trying to use. Again, staff may instead direct patrons to resources that do.

Approved by Board of Trustees, October 14, 2014