**Public Access Computer Use and Internet Safety Policy**

**Dixie Regional Library System**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide rules that govern the use of Computers and the Internet in the Dixie Regional Library System (DRLS) by patrons to ensure compliance with state and federal law.

In keeping with the DRLS mission of giving the best library service possible by providing educational and recreational materials, the system provides personal computers and access to internet resources for use by the general public. Most computers in this library system have been provided through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grant to public libraries, Toyota and with funds from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant program through the Mississippi Library Commission. Compliance with these grants specifies that these are “free” services to the patrons.

**Policy on Internet Filtering**

All computer equipment owned by the Dixie Regional Library System, for both staff and patron use, are filtered to:

* prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications
* prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity
* prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors
* comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

Specifically, as required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors.

Adult patrons or minors with parental or guardian permission (must be present with the child) may request that filters be deactivated for the purpose of bona fide research, but, in doing so, must continue to abide by all laws, federal and state, including the Mississippi State laws regarding obscenity (specifically MS Code 97-5-27; MS Code 97-5-29). These cited State laws define what is considered to be obscene and/or inappropriate material to be viewed in public.

DRLS cannot censor access to materials or protect users from materials which some may find offensive. DRLS cannot monitor information accessible from the Internet and does not accept responsibility for its content. Therefore, DRLS, its employees, and its trustees will not be held responsible for any objectionable materials accessed from the Internet by any patron, regardless of age. DRLS adheres to the same standards of privacy and confidentiality endorsed by the American Library Association and outlined in their “Library Bill of Rights” and the “Freedom to Read” statements.

**Children’s Internet Use**

Because no filtering solution is 100% effective, the library cannot guarantee that children will be protected at all times from harmful material on the Internet.

Restriction of a child’s access to the Internet, as with any library materials, is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian. Parents/legal guardians should let their children know what they can and cannot access on the Internet and they must supervise their children’s use. The library does not have the right or the legal responsibility to act in *loco parentis*. Parents are solely responsible for what a child views on a personal computer through the wireless access.

**Computers and the Internet**

In choosing sources to link to its home page, the library follows its materials selection guidelines. However, the library cannot be responsible for changes in content of the sources to which its home pages link, or, for the content of sources accessed through secondary links.

DRLS encourages all patrons to be informed users and carefully evaluate information obtained via the Internet. The information may or may not be:

* reliable, and, may or may not be obtained from a reliable source;
* accurate;
* current; and,
* may be considered controversial or offensive by some patrons and/or library staff.

The Internet is not a secure medium; third parties may be able to obtain information regarding patrons' activities.

**Responsibilities of Staff**

Basic personal knowledge of computer use, software applications, and Internet use is expected of patrons. Library staff is able to offer basic searching and word processing assistance but cannot provide in-depth training on Internet and computer use.

* Staff will provide computer assistance to the public as time permits.
* Library staff will provide assistance with library equipment malfunctions.
* Library staff cannot assist in configuration of personal computers.
* Library staff cannot control the speed of Internet access.

**Disclaimer**

Dixie Regional Library System assumes no responsibility for damages caused by programs downloaded from the Internet nor shall the library be responsible for any data loss or damage to personal equipment. The Library cannot assure the safety of your data when you use either our wired or wireless Internet access. The library has neither a secure server nor encryption software to safeguard transmission of sensitive personal or financial information. However, the library will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law.

**Rules of Conduct Regarding Internet and Computer Use**

Library users must be aware that Internet and computer access in a public setting carries certain responsibilities. An important obligation is to comply with Federal and State laws relating to copyright, security, obscenity, materials harmful to juveniles, and other laws regarding electronic media.

The library reserves the right to set rules as needed to promote equitable computer use, revise these rules as needed.

**Rules Governing Use of the Computers and the Internet**

**ACCESS:**

**1.** Wired access is only available for DRLS computers (no outside computers are allowed to connect to the wired network).

**2.** Priority for computer usage will be given to programs scheduled by the Library.

**3.** Use of computers is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**4.** All users must sign in at the circulation desk to agree to the rules and register for the next available computer.

**5.** Regular patrons must have their library cards verified and a clear record [no overdue items or fines] before using the computers.

**6.** Guests who do not have a library card may be accommodated with a guest pass.

**7.** By signing for a child’s library card, parents give permission for the child to use the filtered Internet connections or children’s computers. Parents may request in writing to rescind permission for access for their children under the age of 18.

**8.** Computer time is scheduled on a first come basis for a 30 minute time period. If no one is waiting, the patron may continue use.

**9.** Only one person may sit at one computer at a time unless prior permission is obtained, or, unless a parent and child are working together.

**10.** With pre-approval by the staff, patrons taking online tests are exempt from the 30 minute time period and may use the computer for the duration of the test.

**11.** All computer work, including printing and downloading, must be finished 10 minutes before closing time. Patrons must leave the computer promptly at closing time and exit the building.

**SERVICES:**

**1. E-Mail:**

The Library does not provide E-mail service to its patrons through its server, but patrons can access an E-mail account through web services, such as Yahoo.

**2. Printing:** NO outside paper will be allowed.

Black and white prints made from the computer workstations are $.15 per copy; front and back copies, $.30. Color prints, where available, cost $.50 per copy; double-sided, $1.00.

Any unpaid print jobs will be linked to a patron; fees will be assessed and must be paid before the next computer use.

**3. File Storage:**

Patrons may bring their own compatible storage media for downloading/saving files. Some storage devices may be available at the circulation desk.

The library is not responsible for loss of patron data on the computers. Information cannot be saved permanently on the hard drive of the computers. The Library System reserves the right to erase any files or materials on the hard drive at any time.

**4. Genealogy Computers:**

Computers and software in Genealogy areas are reserved for use by patrons seeking family and local history documents. Other usage may be allowed when these computers are available.

**5. Wireless:**

Wireless access and wireless printing is available at all branches. By accessing this service, users are accepting the Internet/Computer Users Agreement. Signal strength may vary within each building. Virus and security protection for personal devices is the responsibility of the patron.

**Juristic Notations**

The U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principles of "fair use." Users may not copy or distribute electronic materials (including email, text, images, programs or data) without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Any responsibility for any results of copyright infringement lies with the user.

The Mississippi Code 1972, annotated:

• Section 97-5-29 Public display of sexually oriented materials.

• Section 97-45-3 Computer fraud.

• Section 97-45-7 Offenses against computer equipment.

• Section 39-3-365 Confidentiality of library user records.

Please read the attached codes. Responsibility for any results of disobeying these laws lies with the user. Dixie Regional Library System expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through the Internet. Parents are solely responsible for what a child views on a personal computer through wireless access.

**Mississippi Code 1972, Annotated:**

**Section 97-5-29. Public display of sexually oriented materials.**

(1) Any person who intentionally and knowingly places sexually oriented materials upon public display, or who knowingly and intentionally fails to take prompt action to remove such a display from property in his possession after learning of its existence shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined for each offense not less than five hundred dollars ($500.00) nor more than five thousand dollars ($5,000.00) or be imprisoned for not more than one (1) year in the county jail, or be punished by both such fine and imprisonment.

(2) For purposes of this section any material is sexually oriented if the material consists of representations or descriptions of actual or simulated masturbation, sodomy, excretory functions, lewd exhibition of the genitals or female breast, sadomasochistic abuse (for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification), homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, sexual intercourse, or physical contact with a person’s clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or the breast or breasts of a female for the purpose of sexual stimulation, gratification or perversion.

(3) A person places sexually oriented material upon public display within the meaning of this section if he places the materials on or in a billboard, viewing screen, theater stage or marquee, newsstand, display rack, window, showcase, display case or similar place so that sexually oriented materials is easily visible from a public street, public road or sidewalk or from areas of public business in which minors are normally business invitees.

Sources: Laws, 1979, ch. 475, 2, eff from and after July 1, 1979.

**Section 97-45-3. Computer fraud; penalties.**

(1) Computer fraud is the accessing or causing to be accessed of any computer, computer system, computer network, or any part thereof with the intent to:

(a) Defraud; or

(b) Obtain money, property or services by means of false or fraudulent conduct, practices or representations; or through the false or fraudulent alteration, deletion or insertion of programs or data.

(2) Whoever commits the offense of computer fraud shall be punished, upon conviction, by a fine of not more than Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000.00), or by imprisonment for not more than five (5) years, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Sources: Laws, 1985, ch. 319, 2, eff from and after July 1, 1985.

**Section 97-45-7. Offense against computer equipment; penalties.**

(1) An offense against computer equipment or supplies is the intentional modification or destruction, without consent, of computer equipment or supplies used or intended to be used in a computer, computer system or computer network.

(2) Whoever commits an offense against computer equipment or supplies shall be punished, upon conviction, by a fine of not more than One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00), or by imprisonment for not more than six months or both such fine and imprisonment. However, when the damage or loss amounts to a value of One Hundred Dollars ($100.00) or more, the offender may be punished, upon conviction, by a fine of not more than Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000.00) or by imprisonment for not more than five (5) years, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Sources: Laws, 1985, ch. 319, 4, eff from and after July 1, 1985.

**Section 39-3-365. Confidentiality of library user records.**

Records maintained by any library funded in whole or in part by public funds, which contain information relating to the identity of a library user, relative to the user’s use of books or other materials at the library, shall be confidential. Such records may only be released with the express written permission of the respective library user or as the result of a court order.

Sources: Laws, 1992, ch. 521, 1, eff from and after July 1, 1992.

**Responsible Use: Internet/Computer Users Agreement**

**to do:**

1. Patrons may use only computers designated for public use. No outside computers are allowed to connect to the wired network.
2. It is the responsibility of the user to use the computers and printers in a manner consistent with the purposes for which they are provided.
3. Patrons must use caution not to disclose, use, or disseminate personal information online.  Parents should caution children never to reveal information of a personal nature, i.e., phone numbers, addresses.
4. Patrons should report any software or equipment problems to the staff.
5. Patrons must agree not to access the Internet for illegal purposes or send, receive, display or print inappropriate material that may be construed as obscene. (Miss. Code 97-5-29)
6. Patrons must take proper care of all equipment, manuals and instructional materials.

**not to do:**

1. The following activities are strictly prohibited:

* Installation or alteration of software or files belonging to the library, other users, or other networks.
* Use of anonymous Internet proxy servers (or any other approaches which produce similar results) to evade and/or circumvent the content filtering system
* Executing files or scripts on any library device;
* Deliberate propagation of computer viruses;
* Actions that cause damage to equipment or software; if equipment or software is damaged as a result of carelessness or malicious action, the patron is responsible for replacement of damaged equipment.

**consequences:**

1. Loss of computer privileges will result by willful violation of library policies stated above or by refusal to follow staff directions.

* First offense = 1 week; Second offense = 4 weeks; Third offense = 12 weeks. A warning may be issued first, at the discretion of the Branch Manager.

1. The library staff reserves the right to terminate computer use and to deny use to repeat abusers.

* For three documented cases of computer abuse noted on a patron’s record, all library privileges may be suspended for a period of six months (or a time determined by the Director) in addition to the loss of computer privileges.

1. Illegal acts involving library computer resources, such as hacking, will be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.

**Violators of this policy may lose all library privileges.**