

City of Rancho Mirage Public Library

Computer & Internet Use Policy

POLICY

The fundamental mission of the Rancho Mirage Public Library is to actively provide free and open access to informational, educational, recreational, and cultural resources to serve the diverse needs of Library patrons of all ages and backgrounds.

The Internet, as an information resource, enables the Library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection. It allows access to ideas, information and commentary from around the globe. Because of this international character, the Internet is an unregulated medium of information. As such, while it offers a wealth of excellent information, it also enables access to some material that may be controversial, unreliable, misleading, personally offensive, or illegal under U.S. law.

The Library upholds and affirms the First Amendment right of each individual to have access to all constitutionally protected material, including the Internet, on all adult public access computers. The Library does not filter or otherwise limit adult access to material on the Internet and does not accept responsibility for its content.

The Rancho Mirage Public Library assumes responsibility only for the information provided on its home page. The Library's home page, accessed at www.ranchoiragelibrary.org, is designed and maintained by Library staff. The home page also features Hyperlinks to other Internet sites. In choosing sources to link, staff follows the Library's material selection guidelines.

- The Library is not responsible for changes in the content of the sources to which patrons link, or for the content of sources accessed through secondary links.
- The Library can neither censor access to all controversial material nor protect patrons from information they may find offensive.
- The Library does not warrant that its website, the server that makes it available, or any links from its site to other websites are free of viruses or other harmful components.
- The Library does not retain records of the Internet sites which an individual patron visits.

The Library does not provide e-mail accounts to users; however, user may establish or access their own accounts with commercial e-mail services through the Library's Internet terminals.

PATRON USE GUIDELINES

The Library strives to balance the rights of patrons to access various types of information resources with the rights of users to work in a public environment free from disruptive sounds and graphic visual images. There are information resources on the Internet that in inappropriate for viewing in a public setting. Because the Library is a public place shared by people of all ages, Library staff reserves the right to terminate a patron's Internet/computer session at any time the Library staff deems the use to be in conflict with the Rancho Mirage Public Library's *Computer & Internet Use Policy*.

GENERAL USE (applies to all patrons)

Public access to the Internet is available on computer workstations located in the Library's "Jeanne & Charlie Parrish Computer Room," its "Children's Room" and in its public Cafe. The Library also offers free wireless Internet access to patrons who prefer to work in the Library on their personal laptop computers.

- To register to use the Library's computers, patrons must agree to observe the general *Library Use Policy* and this *Computer & Internet Use Policy* while using the Library's computers.
- Patrons are asked to respect the privacy of other computer users and refrain from viewing or commenting upon what others are viewing or typing.
- Patrons are asked not to engage in behavior that is disturbing to other users.
- Use of the Internet access workstations is free and is on a first-come, first-served basis, for 60 minutes per patron per day. There is no requirement to have a library card to use the computers; a one-day visitor's pass may be obtained from library staff. Patrons are responsible for print charges, which must be prepaid.
- Patrons may download files to floppy disks, CDs, or flash drives only. The library is not responsible for damage to patrons' disk or computers, or for any loss of data, damage or liability that may occur due to a computer virus contracted from patron use of the Library's Internet services or equipment.
- The Library's computer workstations are set up for optimal usage by a single individual. In some cases, such as a parent/guardian with children, it may be important for two or more people to work together at a computer workstation. However, if the activities of a group interfere with the effective use of the library by others, group members will be asked to correct the behavior, or leave the computer area.

INTERNET USE BY CHILDREN

- Children under age 13 are encouraged to use the computers located in the Children's Room area of the Library. The Library has created a home page and activities for children entitled "Kids' Library" to provide educational information and activities for children, as well as Hyperlinks to other websites for use by children.
- Computers made available for children in the Children's Room are equipped with a commercial filter. Its purpose is to block access to materials through the Internet that are inappropriate for viewing in the public setting of a Library or serve limited educational or informational purposes for children. However, no filter is ever completely successful in blocking inappropriate sites and commercial filters have a variable rate of effectiveness in screening out age-inappropriate sites.
- Parents, guardians and caregivers are encouraged to work with their children to develop acceptable rules of Internet use. It is their responsibility to set family standards and guidelines and to decide which library resources and Internet websites are appropriate for their children. Library staff are available to assist parents and their children with Internet use and to help identify appropriate Internet sites. The Library has neither the right nor the responsibility to act in place of a parent or guardian and assumes no responsibility for the use of the Internet by minors.
- Parents are encouraged to read "Child Safety on the Information Highway," available at any library service desk or on the Internet (www.safekids.com/child_safety.htm).
- Children under age 13 may not use computers in the Jeanne & Charlie Parrish Computer Room or in the Cafe unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult age 18 or older.

UNACCEPTABLE USE

Library computers and computing resources may not be used for any illegal purposes. Unacceptable use of the Library's computers will result in a request for compliance prior to direction to leave the facility, or may result in the loss of computer privileges or possible prosecution. Patrons are financially liable for any damage caused either directly or indirectly to any equipment or software belonging to the Rancho Mirage Public Library.

Unacceptable use includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Using the Internet for illegal activities, including but not limited to, using the Internet in violation of 47 United States Code 223(a) to make, create, solicit, or initiate transmissions of obscene material or displaying harmful, offensive text or graphics when minors are present;

- Displaying via the Library's computers any harmful matter as defined in California Penal Code Section 313 et. Seq.;
- Transmitting material that is threatening, obscene or disruptive;
- Hacking into the Library computer system or any other computer system or attempting to delete, copy, modify, or forge other users' mail or files;
- Gaining unauthorized access to files or records of another person or entity;
- Sending harassing, threatening, defamatory, or illegal messages or material to other computer users;
- Violating copyright laws and software licensing agreements;
- Plugging non-approved devices into the computer(s);
- Damaging, vandalizing, or attempting to damage or alter the Library's computer equipment, resources, data or software or interfering with systems operations, integrity, or security, including intentional propagation of computer viruses;
- Creating a disturbance, as determined by Library staff.

Library users are asked to report to staff at the Information Desk or Children's Desk if another patron is disturbing their use of the library's computers.

Copies of this policy shall be posted on the Library's website to inform the public of the Rancho Mirage Public Library's *Computer & Internet Use Policy*.

Adopted by the Library Board of Directors 4 October 2004

Amended for review by Library Advisory Commission 10 December 2007