

# LIBRARY COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE POLICY

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## Purpose

Menlo Park Library provides free public access to the internet and internet-connected devices to ensure universal access to this vast and vital source of information and communication. This policy exists to ensure the fair and reasonable use of online resources. By accessing the internet using library network connections and/or library-provided internet-connected devices, or by accessing the internet inside library facilities using other public or private wireless networks, users agree to all terms and conditions expressed in this policy.

## User responsibilities

The internet and online environments found on the internet contain information on a wide range of topics, provided by billions of individuals and organizations around the world. Library patrons are advised to exercise judgement and discernment when evaluating the usefulness and reliability of material found on the internet. Not all information available online is accurate, complete, up-to-date, lawful, or philosophically acceptable to all individuals. Menlo Park Library has no control over the information found on the internet, and cannot be held responsible for its content.

Menlo Park Library assumes no responsibility and shall have no liability for any direct, indirect, or consequential damages arising from providing internet-connected devices and internet access to the public.

In addition, patrons are responsible for:

- Any consequences that arise from unlawful or prohibited activities while using library equipment and/or networks
- Saving their own work on a storage device of their choosing such as a flash drive, email, or cloud storage
- Evaluating the accuracy of the material they may find online.

## Safety and Privacy

Menlo Park Library is committed to protecting the privacy of its customers and staff. The library will keep confidential all such information that it purposefully or inadvertently collects or maintains to the fullest extent permitted by the Public Records Act (California Government Code, Title 1, Div. 7, Chapter 3.5, Section 6267) and other State or Federal Statutes. At public computers, all documents created, Internet search histories, temporary file, cache, and certificates are purged upon the rebooting of the PCs.

Library patrons are warned that the Internet is not a secure medium and that privacy of email and other communications is not guaranteed. Though Menlo Park Library employs antivirus software, it cannot warrant that its server or any web site accessed by Internet users is free of viruses or other harmful components. Users should assume that their information may not be private. Menlo Park Library is not liable for the loss or compromise of confidential or sensitive, or any other information, or for any and all damages resulting from that loss or compromise.

It is solely the responsibility of the wireless device owner/user to provide antivirus protection, and to configure personal equipment with appropriate security settings to control access from other wireless devices within library facilities and the Internet itself. Wireless users assume all risks in this regard.

## Freedom of Access

Menlo Park Library adheres to the American Library Association's policy statement Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, which supports the right of individuals to choose library materials for themselves, including those in electronic formats. As such, Menlo Park Library does not monitor or filter, and has no control over or responsibility for the information accessed through the internet.

Menlo Park Library strives to balance the goal of supporting intellectual access with that of maintaining a welcoming environment. Unless a patron is viewing material that is harmful or obscene, staff will not interfere with a patron's right to privacy. Equally, in the case that a patron's use of the Internet, computers, and/or devices interferes with the ability of the library to provide a welcoming environment for the public, they may be asked to change their behavior, per the Library Use Guidelines and other relevant policies.

## Usage

Menlo Park Library provides free public access to the internet in multiple ways, including: devices for in-library use only; borrowable devices for 7-day checkout; and an unsecured wireless network available to people with their own wireless devices. This policy applies to the use of each of these services.

A valid library card registered in the patron database used by Menlo Park Library is required to borrow any device, either for in-library or take-home use. Each patron must use their own library card when borrowing a device.

Devices for 7-day checkout are available only to residents of the City of Menlo Park.

Devices for in-library use are available from the time the library opens until five minutes before closing.

Laptop computers include USB ports for using flash drives. Users may bring their own flash drives to save their files. Files saved to a laptop will be automatically deleted when the laptop is restarted.

Security measures have been taken to prevent the unintentional or intentional changing of operating system or software settings. Uploading or downloading files from portable drives to the Internet is allowed.

Should patrons wish to use sound on any device, they are asked to use headphones. Wired earbuds are available to patrons who do not have their own headphones.

Scanning services are free. Limited printing of certain documents is available as detailed in the Document Reproduction Policy

Library staff may be able to provide basic help regarding computers and the internet, but they cannot provide in-depth help.

## Conduct

The computer and internet resources offered by Menlo Park Library are to be used in accordance with principles of respect for other users of the system and the equipment. Therefore, the library has the following expectations of computer users:

### DO

- Comply with the Library Use Guidelines and other relevant policies, as stated above
- Comply with any staff member's reasonable request to refrain from or change a disruptive behavior
- Respect the privacy of others who are using a computer, and while using a computer
- Be aware that some materials may upset other viewers, and exercise respect in this regard
- Keep your belongings with you at all times
- Refrain from harming library equipment or systems through the use of viruses or other malicious acts.

### DON'T

- Attempt to access or tamper with settings or files on the hard disk by modifying, deleting or in any way altering them
- Unplug, remove, or otherwise modify library equipment
- Use software on library-provided equipment other than that provided and installed by the library.
- Make unauthorized entry into other networks or systems, or in any other way violate system security
- Violate the privacy of others, harass other users, or send harassing or threatening messages
- Display sexually or violently graphic material on the screen; this is considered offensive behavior, and can harm the safety and well-being of others, and is a violation of the Library Use Guidelines.
- Disrupt or obstruct the work of others.

## Applicable laws

Use of Menlo Park Library's network and equipment for transmission, dissemination, and/or duplication of information is regulated under various state and federal laws. All users are expected to comply with all applicable laws, including but not limited to those related to copyright, computer hacking, and child pornography. Laws governing the use of the library's public internet devices and networks include, but are not limited to:

- Copyright: United States Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principle of “fair use.” This includes electronic information sources and software.
- Child Pornography: California Penal Code Section 311.3 prohibits the sexual exploitation of a child: “A person is guilty of sexual exploitation of a child if he or she knowingly...duplicates, prints, or exchanges any representation of information, data or image...that depicts a person under the age of 18 years engaged in an act of sexual conduct.” Anyone who does so is also subject to federal criminal prosecution under the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation Act of 1977 (18 USC 2232).
- Tampering with Equipment and Software: It is illegal for users to physically or electronically modify library computer equipment, or to tamper with hardware, software, or computer networks (California Penal Code, Section 502 et. seq.).
- Display of Harmful Material: California Penal Code, Chapter 7.5, Sections 311-312, prohibits the public display of obscene and harmful material. The viewing of obscene and harmful material on a computer screen in a public area, such as a library, constitutes public display and is therefore prohibited.

**Internet use by minors**

As with other library materials, use of library devices and network is the parent or guardian’s responsibility. It is recommended that parents and guardians supervise their children’s use of the internet and discuss safe Internet practices with their children. Menlo Park Library does not act *in loco parentis* (in the place or role of a parent or guardian) in the supervision or restriction of children’s use of the Internet.

While the Library provides unfiltered internet access, the library reserves the ability to make limited or filtered access to the internet available at certain locations within its facilities.

**Violation**

Violation of this policy or the Library Use Guidelines may result in suspension or revocation of library privileges. Use of the computers for illegal activity is subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities.

**Policy review**

This policy shall be reviewed at least every five years.

**Policy history**

Action	Date	Notes
Policy adopted	July 1, 2006	Administrative policy
Policy updated	October 21, 2019	Library Commission reviewed
Policy updated	July 17, 2023	Library Commission recommended