

Sara Hightower Regional Library System Internet Access Policy

In response to advances in technology and the changing needs of the community, the Sara Hightower Regional Library endeavors to develop collections, resources, and services that meet the cultural, informational, recreational, and educational needs of Rome's diverse, multicultural community. It is within this context that the library offers access to the Internet.

The Sara Hightower Regional Library has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. The Internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population and library patrons use it at their own risk.

Parents or guardians, NOT the library or its staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Parents are requested to supervise their children's Internet sessions.

Staff Assistance

Library staff cannot provide in-depth training concerning Internet computer jargon or personal computers use. We will attempt to offer searching suggestions and answer very basic questions concerning in-house use. Internet-trained staff may not always be available.

Have fun exploring the Internet, but please remember that many times you will find the specific information you need right here...in books, periodicals, etc.

Internet Use Guidelines

1. Sign in to use the Internet on any public computer with your valid library card and PIN/Password. By signing in, you are stating that you have read and agree to the policies and guidelines as outlined here.
2. Cell phone use is not permitted in the library.
3. Internet terminals are available from the branch opening time until 15 minutes prior to closing. **See branch for hours of operation.**
4. Use of the Internet computers is controlled with PC Reservation and patrons can reserve a computer using the reservation station or by asking staff to reserve one for you.
5. You may use any Internet email provider (such as hotmail.com) to access email within the library.
6. You may not use or install your own software programs on the Internet computers.
7. Flash devices available at the Reference Desk for purchase can be used for downloading or saving files. (This will minimize risk of virus being passed from one computer to another.)
8. You must pay for all copies you make, even those made inadvertently. Black and white copies are .15 cents per page and .75 cents for color prints. Payment is made at the Reference Desk.

9. You may not be able to always go to the places on the Internet that you want to visit. Some explanations follow:

- *There are too many Internet users and the host computer closes access until some users logoff.
- *The database or resource is licensed to authorized users only.
- *The host computer has changed its address or closed down.
- *The library's Internet connection may be having technical difficulties.

10. Users must end their session and leave the terminal when asked to do so by authorized library staff.

11. Users shall respect the privacy of other users and shall refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others, as well as to censor or comment on what others are viewing.

12. The first misuse of the computer or Internet access will result in loss of your Internet privileges for 1 calendar year. The second misuse of the computer or Internet access will result in permanent loss of Internet privileges and local authorities may be notified. Misuse includes but is not limited to:

- *Using or viewing profanity, obscenity or language which may be offensive to another user.
- *Copying commercial software in violation of copyright laws.
- *Using Internet computers for any illegal activity.
- *Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt the system's performance.
- *Destruction of or damage to equipment, software or data belonging to the Library or other users.
- *Disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communication.
- *Transmitting and/or receiving obscene materials and/or child pornography is a violation of law and is not permitted under any circumstances. Violation of this rule will subject a patron to criminal prosecution and result in immediate and permanent loss of library Internet access privileges.
- *Minors, whether or not accompanied by a parent or guardian, shall not use computers for any illegal activity, or to access illegal materials, child pornography, obscene materials, or materials "harmful to minors" as currently defined by law. Violations of this rule may subject a patron to criminal prosecution and will result in immediate loss of library Internet access privileges.
- *Violation of software license agreements.
- *Disruptive behavior at any computer workstation by individuals or groups.

Right of Appeal

An Internet user whose access session has been terminated or whose Internet access has been prohibited shall have the right to appeal and/or request that Internet access privileges be reinstated. An appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Library Director within five days of the termination or prohibition. Within ten days of receipt of the appeal, the Library Director shall review the matter and notify the patron

in writing of his/her decision. If the Library Director's decision is adverse to the patron, the patron may appeal in writing within five days to the Library's Board of Trustees, which shall thereafter consider the matter and issue its decision in writing within 30 days of receipt. No further appeals shall be considered. Temporary or permanent denial of Internet privileges at any Library System facility will be effective at all Library System facilities.

Definitions:

1. "Minor" is a person under 18 years of age. O.C.G.A. 16-12-102(3)
2. "Harmful to minors" is defined as per current Georgia law, O.C.G.A. 16-12-102.
3. "Inappropriate matter" for minors is material that is obscene as defined under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 16-12-80), child pornography as defined under federal and/or state law (18 U.S.C. 2256; O.C.G.A. 16-12-100), and material that is "harmful to minors" as defined in Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 16-12-102).

WARNINGS:

1. Although the library uses a virus-checker on computers, this will not completely protect you from the chance of getting a virus. Software downloaded from the Internet may contain a virus. You need to have virus-checking software on your computer. The Sara Hightower Regional Library is not responsible for damage to a patron's disk or computer, or for any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from patron use of the library's computers.
2. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete, or current information. You need to be a good information consumer, questioning validity or the information you find.
3. "Guidelines for Online Safety of Minors" is found in attachment A.
4. Special rules relating to use of the Internet Terminals located in the reference area are found in attachment B.
5. Detailed procedure for reconsideration of Internet use and the Reconsideration Form are found in attachment C.

Internet Access Guidelines Policy Approved February 22, 1996 Amended May 24, 2001

Attachment A

Guidelines for Online Safety of Minors

In an effort to protect the safety and security of minors when using email, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications, we ask that minors agree to the following:

I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.

I will tell the Library Staff right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.

I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.

I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.

I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the online service.

I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules.

For further information on child safety, please call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

Attachment B

Rule for the Internet Workstations in the Reference Department

1. Internet workstations in the Reference Department are for Quick use sessions.
2. Use of Reference workstations will be restricted to three thirty minute sessions.
3. Additional time will be considered on a case-to-case basis if it is determined by library staff that additional time is necessary to complete research activities.

Attachment C

Procedure for reconsideration of Loss of Internet use

The Library will reconsider any written request from a patron regarding Internet use. The request procedure is as follows:

1. The staff member receiving the complaint will prepare a written statement detailing the interchange with the patron. The written statement and the completed patron's form will be given to the Library Director within five (5) working days.
2. The Library Director or designee will investigate and a written report of the findings will be written within ten (10) working days.
3. At the same time that the complaint is sent to the Library Director for investigation, a copy of the complaint will be given to the members of the Trustees Executive Board, as a matter of information.
4. After careful consideration, the Library Director will notify the complainant of the recommended action.
5. At the same time that the complainant is notified of the library's recommendation, the Trustees Executive Board will receive copies.

6. The complainant will be given the opportunity to appeal the recommendation of the library to the Board of Trustees. The complainant will be notified of this option in writing at the time the library's recommendation is sent to said complainant. (See Item 4).
7. If a request for an appeal is filed with the Board of Trustees within ten (10) working days, the Board will refer the complaint to the standing Policies and Overview Committee.
8. Within thirty (30) working days of receipt of the complaint, all members of the Committee will review the matter in question. The Committee will meet to reach a consensus recommendation as to the disposition of the questioned matter.
9. At the next regularly scheduled or called Board meeting, the Committee reports its recommendation concerning the disposition of the complaint to the entire Board.
10. The Board can either accept the Committee's recommendations, or decide to take the matter under the scrutiny of the entire Board. If the latter is decided, the decision will be tabled until the next meeting of the Board.
11. The Board will then inform the Director of its decision concerning the matter in question, and the Director will act in accordance with that decision and notify the complainant.
- 12. The decision of the board will be final.**