

Date Adopted: May 1997

Date Revised: _April 2009

GEORGE HAIL FREE LIBRARY

POLICY ON INTERNET USE and SAFETY POLICY

PURPOSE:

Access to electronic information and networking is a continually evolving area of public and private activity. The George Hail Free Library recognizes that these developments pose new challenges as well as new opportunities for the library board, the library staff, and library users and their families.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Library to provide Internet access service to the public for library related research, informational and learning purposes within the limits of available space, equipment and personnel levels of computer expertise.

The Internet is a global electronic network, which offers access to a nearly unlimited variety of materials and information. However, the quality of that information varies greatly. Not all sources on the Internet provide information that is accurate, complete, current or legal. The Library does not monitor and has no control over the content of materials on the Internet, which often changes rapidly and unpredictably. Library patrons use the internet at their own risk. A good information consumer evaluates the validity of information found. Use of Internet resources carries with it a responsibility to evaluate the quality of the information accessed. The availability of information does not constitute endorsement of the content by the George Hail Free Library.

Users are responsible for the choice of Internet sites that they visit and the Library cannot be held responsible for the contents of any site. Just as the Library does not vouch for or endorse the viewpoints of written materials, we do not do so for electronic information.

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At the same time, users are urged to respect the sensibilities of others when accessing information that may reasonably be offensive to someone else. However, absolute privacy for patrons using electronic resources in the Library cannot be guaranteed. There exists a possibility of inadvertent viewing by other patrons, either by watching the user's screen, or because a user may leave the screen unattended.

A patron may be asked to leave such a site if a complaint is made to the staff.

Use of a library computer workstation shall constitute agreement by the user to:

- Make no changes in the setup or configuration of software or hardware.
- Not attempt to modify or gain access to system files, passwords or data.
- Not seek unauthorized access to any computer system or network.
- Make only authorized copies of data.
- Abide by the decision of library staff regarding use of all equipment.
- Restrict Internet use to the time established by the library staff.

As with other Library materials, any restriction of a child's access to electronic resources, including the Internet, is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian. The George Hail Library does not act *in loco parentis*. Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the Library is the responsibility of the user. In the case of minors, it is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian. The only exception would be if the staff feels a child is putting him/herself at risk.

The George Hail Free Library does not itself filter materials found on the Internet but it does adhere to and use the filtering system in place by Ocean State Libraries, which filters out child pornography and adult pornography.

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If the staff determines a patron using a site for any illegal purpose, the police will be called.

Users of Library computing resources must comply with federal and state laws, Library rules and policies, and the terms of applicable contracts including software licenses while using Library computing resources. Examples of applicable laws, rules and policies include the laws of libel, privacy, copyright, trademark, obscenity and child pornography, and the Electronic Communications Privacy Act and the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, which prohibit “hacking,” “cracking” and similar activities. Users who engage in electronic communications with persons in other states or countries may also be subject to the laws of those jurisdictions.

The George Hail Free Public Library upholds the right of confidentiality and privacy for all library users. At the same time, users are urged to respect the sensibilities of others when accessing information that may reasonably be offensive to someone else. However, absolute privacy for patrons using electronic resources in the Library cannot be guaranteed. There exists a possibility of inadvertent viewing by other patrons, either by watching the user’s screen, or because a user may leave the screen unattended.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in loss of computer privileges.