

Public Internet Services and Technology

Policy Number: **OP-07**

Initial Policy Approval Date: **Feb. 2000**

Last Review/Revision Date: **Sept. 2021, 2024**

Year of Next Review: **2028**

The Port Colborne Public Library Board endorses the use of the internet as an essential source of information to complement traditional library collections. The internet is also recognized as an essential communication tool, connecting individuals and communities of interest. At the same time, the internet functions in an unregulated environment, and therefore provides access to a wide variety of resources over which the Port Colborne Public Library has no control.

The Port Colborne Public Library provides public access to the internet in keeping with its role in providing equal access to information and resources to meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of the community. This policy establishes the provision of public network services to access the internet, acceptable use of these services, and consequences of inappropriate behaviour or illegal activity by users.

Due to the changing nature of these services, this policy is subject to change without notice and at the board's discretion.

Section 1: Access to the Public Network

1. The library provides members of the public with Internet access through the library's networked desktop computers and laptops as well as through the library's wireless network which can be used with personal mobile devices.
2. Wired and/or wireless access to the internet via public computers or users' personal devices is provided free of charge.
3. The library provides workstations that are adapted for people with disabilities.
4. To ensure equitable access to the public network and efficient use of resources, the library reserves the right to set time limits or ask users to limit their time on the library's public computers.

Section 2: Internet Filtering

1. The library does not use filtering software. It is the position of the board that filtering technology is not effective in making the internet safer for children or preventing criminal activity. This access to, and use of, the public computer network is compatible with the Port Colborne Public Library position on Intellectual Freedom (See FN-04).

Section 3: Use by Children

1. Children may access all information and use all facilities provided by the library. The board will ensure that children's access to the Internet is compatible with the policy on Children in the Library (OP-10) and the Port Colborne Public Library position on Intellectual Freedom (FN-04).
2. Parents and guardians are reminded that the restriction of a child's use of a library computer, including Internet and wireless access, is their responsibility. The library board accepts no responsibility for enforcing restrictions which a parent or guardian places on a child's use of the internet.

Section 4: Reliability and Appropriateness of Information on the Internet

1. The internet functions as an unregulated global environment, and therefore provides access to a wide variety of resources over which the library has no control. The Port Colborne Public Library has no control over the information accessed through the internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Many sites carry information users may find controversial, inappropriate, or obscene. The internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population and library patrons use it at their own discretion.
2. Users are reminded that not all sources on the internet provide age-appropriate, accurate, complete, or current information. Users should evaluate internet sources as they would print publications and may need to question the validity of the information found.
3. The board is not responsible for the accuracy, quality, legality, appropriateness or availability of any internet sources accessed through the library's public network. This is the responsibility of the producer/originator or publisher.

4. The library cannot control the availability of information links that often change rapidly and unpredictably.
5. The library endeavours to minimize the opportunity for unintentional exposure by people using library space to content being accessed by another library user.
6. The library reserves the right to set time limits or ask users to limit their time on the public computers. Library staff reserve the right to adjust computer time and scheduling as necessary.
7. In respect of the range of sensibilities and viewpoints of its diverse clientele, staff will remind users that they are in a public space and will encourage all users to respect the sensibilities of others. Staff reserve the right to redirect users whose activities on the public computers or their personal devices diminish the enjoyment of the library space by others.
8. The library does not assume any responsibility for the configuration, security or files on personal devices resulting from connection to the library's network. Users should be aware that information sent to or from their devices can be captured by anyone else with a wireless device and appropriate software.
9. The board assumes no responsibility for the security and privacy of online transactions, as the internet is not a secure medium and third parties may be able to obtain information about the user's activities.
10. The library is not responsible for any damages sustained while using a personal device.
11. The library will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by, or the potential repercussions of a third party using, personal/banking/credit card information that has been entered via the public network.

Section 6: Privacy and Confidentiality

1. Use of the library's public network falls under the provision of policy OP-01: Privacy, Access to Information and Electronic Messages under CASL.
2. Privacy at the workstations is not guaranteed and users must respect the privacy of others. Internet workstations are situated in public areas, and content being viewed

by users may be seen by other people. Staff will take reasonable measures to ensure privacy and confidentiality, however, library staff cannot guarantee privacy at the library workstations.

Section 7: Conditions and Terms of Acceptable Use in the Library

1. To ensure equitable access to the public network and efficient use of resources, the board sets rules for public network access and reserves the right to modify these whenever and wherever appropriate.
2. Violation of the library's Internet Access Policy may result in the loss of internet privileges and/or removal from the library.
3. Any library users involved in illegal activities will be subject to criminal prosecution.
4. Users who deliberately violate the rules may have their library privileges suspended.
5. There are information resources which are inappropriate to a library setting. Because the library is a public place, library staff has the authority to end an Internet session when such material displays on the screen.
6. The **Acceptable Use Rules** are:
 - a) Users should view the use of the computers for internet access in the same way as they view the use of the general collection; that is, they are shared resources.
 - b) Users should view the use of the public computers and personal devices in the library the same way as they view the use of any library space and should restrain from activities that disturb others and use designated spaces for groups and audio (e.g. Skype).
 - c) When viewing the internet, users should be respectful of sensibilities of others. Users may not send, receive, or display text or graphics which may reasonably be construed as obscene.
 - d) Users must respect the laws of Canada when using the public network. Use of the public network for illegal, actionable or criminal purposes is prohibited. Examples of such illegal activities include, but are not limited to, harassment

- or stalking, libel, illegal commerce or solicitation, "hacking" or tampering with other computer systems, viewing, downloading and/or printing child pornography. Users who violate the rules may have their library privileges suspended or be required to leave the library. Illegal use, within the definitions of federal or provincial legislation, will be reported to the police.
- e) Users of the public network may not violate or circumvent copyright and other intellectual property rights. The board will promote fair use copyright principles and will advise users of their legal responsibilities regarding these.
 - f) Users of the public network may not attempt to gain unauthorized access to files, data, or passwords belonging to others or seek unauthorized access to any computer system.
 - g) Misuse or abuse of computers or software is not acceptable. Offenders may be required to leave the library. User-created files must not be saved on the library's computers. Files that are saved will be removed. Users may store files on personal removable storage media.
 - h) User-supplied software will not be installed on the library's computers, and users must not modify or reconfigure software installed on the library's computers.
7. Library staff will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all users comply with the Acceptable Use Rules.
8. The library will post an "Acceptable Use Agreement" as a landing page for reviewing before using the library's Internet. Consequently, anyone not adhering to the 'Acceptable Use Agreement' will have their library privileges suspended and will be legally and financially responsible for damages.

Section 8: Assistance from Staff

1. Library staff will assist patrons with internet use as time permits but cannot offer in-depth training. Users who require extra help or training are encouraged to take advantage of training if scheduled in the library and to investigate formal education programs available elsewhere in the region.
2. Staff will provide assistance with:

- finding and evaluating the quality of an internet site
- access to the public workstations
- helping users begin their search for information
- access to subscription databases and e-books

Section 9: Printing

1. Printouts are available for a fee.

Section 10: Wireless Access

1. The library offers no guarantee or warranty with respect to wireless access. The library assumes no responsibility or liability for personal equipment, configuration, security measures and/or data connected to, or travelling through the library's network.
2. Library staff are not permitted to provide technical assistance with the configuration of personal equipment.
3. No guarantee can be provided that users will be able to make a wireless connection or connect at a particular speed.

Section 11: The Port Colborne Public Library's Website

1. The library will maintain a website that provides:
 - a) information about services and operations
 - b) access to the catalogue and to users' online accounts
 - c) access to subscription databases and e-books
 - d) a selected, evaluated and organized collection of reliable and current information sources available on the Internet
 - e) a range of accessibility features through assistive technology conforming with WCAG 2.0 guidelines

Related Documents:

- Port Colborne Public Library. OP 01: Privacy, Access to Information and Electronic Messages under CASL
- Port Colborne Public Library. FN 04: Statement on Intellectual Freedom
- Port Colborne Public Library. OP 15: Accessibility in the Library