

Administrative Rules

Rule 1.3.2 – Internet Access

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Overview and General Rules

I. PURPOSE

It is the mission of the Deschutes Public Library to ensure that the residents of the Library District have the right and means to free and open access to ideas and information. Free and equal access to information is the bedrock of a democratic society.

It is the role of the public library to guide patrons to accurate, relevant information and literature. The Library seeks to guide citizens to the most useful resources, but does not have the constitutional authority to restrict access to constitutionally protected speech or images using content as a criteria.

The Library does have the authority to regulate behavior within its facilities if such behavior would jeopardize the health and safety of minors, or would result in the creation of a sexually hostile environment for staff and library users.

Access to, use of, or dissemination of constitutionally unprotected (legally obscene) speech is unacceptable in the Library.

II. OBJECTIVE

The objective of these rules is to provide library users access to information and communication available on the Internet which is deemed to be constitutionally protected speech, imposing only those regulations which are required to provide equitable access to library resources, prevent vandalism or illegal activity, avoid the creation of a sexually hostile environment, or which are needed to protect the health and safety of minors.

These rules shall not be applied in such a manner as to restrict access to information or communication using content as a criteria. Library users have the constitutional right to access objectionable material.

III. RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. Staff-assisted Internet Search

Staff assisting patrons with research may utilize the Internet without consulting a parent/guardian. Internet usage in such instances shall be limited to the research question. Staff is authorized to bypass blocking software as needed while providing reference assistance.

B. Children's Internet Stations

These stations may require parental permission at time of usage, or log-on using a valid account approved by a parent.

Computers designated as "Children's Internet Stations" shall operate with blocking software activated to block sexually explicit material.

Signage shall be posted near these computers stating that blocking software has been activated. Signage shall also caution that blocking software will not block all objectionable sites and will block some sites that contain valuable information.

Children's Internet Stations are intended for younger children. Staff is authorized to refer older minors and adults to Internet Stations located elsewhere in the Library.

C. Managed Internet Stations

Managed Internet stations will require patrons to pre-register in a process similar to library card registration.

During registration, patrons will choose if they wish to have blocking software activated upon log-on. The software has been programmed to block sexually explicit material. Patrons will be cautioned during the registration process that blocking software will not block all objectionable sites and will block some sites that contain valuable information.

A minor below the age of 17 must obtain the permission of a parent/guardian when registering to use Internet stations which require log-on. Staff reserves the right to require proof of age. A parent/guardian grants permission by signing the Internet registration form. The parent/guardian will determine if blocking software will be activated for his/her child by completing this form.

Non-residents may use the Internet stations through the use of generic "guest" registrations. A parent/guardian must be present to authorize Internet use for minors using these guest registrations. The parent/guardian will determine if blocking software will be activated.

Managed Internet Stations limit library users to one hour of Internet usage daily. Additional time may be granted based on resource availability or staff discretion with a maximum of three hours per day.

D. Reconsideration of WEB Sites

Patrons shall be advised that any resident of Deschutes County may submit a form requesting that a site be blocked or unblocked.

Professional librarian(s) with relevant expertise shall review the recommendation. The site will be unblocked unless it is determined that the site contains sexually explicit material or presents an immediate and real threat to the health and safety of minors.

Suggestions to block or unblock sites may be appealed as outlined in Rule 1.3.1 – Reconsideration of Library Materials.

E. Staff Intervention

Staff may direct Internet users to avoid the display of images that create a sexually hostile environment for library users and/or staff.

Staff may direct Internet usage to prevent “hacking” or other criminal behavior.

Staff may intervene as necessary to protect the privacy of library users.

Staff shall not restrict access to information or communication using political, religious, or philosophical content as criteria.

Violation of Library Rules and Regulations may result in the suspension of Internet and/or Library privileges.

F. Wireless Access

Wireless users will be limited to 2 hours of access per day.

Use of the District’s wireless network is at the user’s own risk. The District is not responsible for any damage that may occur to an individual’s personal equipment while connected.

Wireless access is unfiltered. Users who wish to filter will be required to provide their own filtering software.

Virus protection is the user’s responsibility.

Library staff is not responsible for any technical support.

Branch Managers may designate specified areas for wireless use.