

# **Computer Usage Policy**

## **Welcome to BigSky, The Mineral County Public Library System Internet Service**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Internet is a world-wide telecommunications connection to information resources. It is a freely accessible and largely unregulated resource. While the vast majority of sites on the World Wide Web are neutral arenas for information exchange, a small percentage of sites may contain material which might prove offensive to some users. Some information accessed through the Internet may not meet the validity of information found. Use of Internet resources carries with it a responsibility to evaluate the quality of the information accessed.

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.

Parents who are concerned about their children's use of the internet should provide guidelines for their own children and must sign a consent form which authorizes their child to use this service.

The Mineral County Public Library offers this access to the Internet in the belief that it is a critical information resource. The Library assumes no control over the content of the Internet. If a site offends you, for whatever reason, leave the site and/or do not go there.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

In general, the Library will treat information stored on Library computing resources as confidential, whether or not that information is protected by the computer operating system. Requests for disclosure of information will be honored only under one of the following conditions:

- when approved by the appropriate Library administrator;
- when authorized by the owners of the information;
- when required by local, state or federal law.

Except when inappropriate, patrons will receive prior notice of such disclosures. Viewing of information in the course of normal system maintenance does not constitute disclosure.

Patrons who use electronic mail systems should be aware that electronic mail in its present form cannot be secured and is, therefore, extremely vulnerable to unauthorized access and modification.

All users are asked to respect the privacy of other users and not attempt to censor or comment upon what others are viewing.

- 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.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF USERS:**

The patron is responsible for correct and sufficient use of the tools available for maintaining the security of information on each computer system. The following precautions are strongly recommended:

- Computer accounts, passwords and other types of authorization that are assigned to individual patrons should not be shared with others.
- The patron should assign an obscure account password and change it frequently.
- The patron should understand that files saved on Library computing resources may not be totally secure.
- The patron should be aware of computer viruses and other destructive computer programs, and take steps to avoid being a victim or unwitting distributor of these processes.

Ultimate responsibility for resolution of problems related to the invasion of the patron's privacy or loss of data rests with the patron. The Library assumes no liability for loss or damage to the patron's data or for any damage or injury arising from invasion of the patron's privacy.

Patrons should notify library staff immediately if they experience any problems with the equipment or software.

### **LEGAL USE:**

The public and staff may use library computing resources only for legal purposes. Examples of unacceptable purposes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Harassment of other patrons;
- Libeling or slandering other patrons;
- Destruction of or damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to the Library or other patrons;
- Disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications;
- Unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material.
- Conducting illegal activities of any kind.
- Minors access of chat rooms

### **ETHICAL USE:**

Library computing resources should be used in accordance with the ethical standards of

the Library. Examples of unacceptable use (some of which may also have legal consequences) include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Violation of computer system security;
- Unauthorized use of computer accounts, access codes, or network identification numbers assigned to others;
- Use of computer communications facilities in ways that unnecessarily impede the computing activities of others, such as randomly initiating interactive electronic communications (chat) or e-mail exchanges (spam), overuse of interactive network utilities, and so forth;
- Violation of software license agreements;
- Violation of network usage policies and regulations;
- Violation of another patron's privacy.

### **COOPERATIVE USE:**

The Library endorses the practice of cooperative computing. This includes:

- Refraining from overuse of connect time, information storage space, printing facilities or processing capacity;
- Refraining from overuse of interactive network utilities;
- Refraining from use of sounds and visuals which might be disruptive to others;
- Refraining from use of any computing resource in an irresponsible manner.

### **SANCTIONS**

Violators of Library computing resource use policies will have their Library privileges suspended or revoked in the sole discretion of the Library Administration. Violations of policies described above for legal and ethical use of Library computing resources will result in the suspension or revocation of Library privileges in the sole discretion of the Library Administration. Illegal acts involving Library computing resources may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.

### **DISPLAY AND DISSEMINATION OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIALS:**

Use of Library computing resources to display or disseminate sexually explicit or sexually suggestive (obscene/pornographic) material in any Library building is prohibited. Violators of this policy will be removed from the Library building and will have their Library privileges revoked.

### **SIGN UP AT SERVICE AREA INFORMATION DESK**

Use of library computing resources is on a first-come, first-served basis. To make better use of Library computing resources and provide equitable access, the Library has installed a sign up system in order to allow the system to monitor patrons' usage time and give them the convenience of using the computer at multiple locations for 1 hour at a time, up to 2 hours a day. (At times of heavy usage, individual use may be limited to ½ hour at a time.)

Children under age 18 need to have a release form signed by a parent or a guardian on file at the circulation desk.

Patrons are not required to have a Mineral County Public Library System card to use Library computing resources.

**TIME LIMITS PER DAY**

There is a time limit of 2 hours per day for every patron, given in intervals of 30 - 60 minutes. Time limits may vary, based upon number of patrons and computer availability.