

## I. Background

The Jones Library System (the Library) supports a lifetime of learning by people of all ages who live, work, and study in Amherst, Massachusetts. Library patrons have access to a wide variety of subject matter in print, audiovisual, and electronic forms to pursue their personal interests, plus ready assistance from knowledgeable professional staff. The Jones Library Board of Trustees endorses the American Library Association's Bill of Rights, a policy that protects a person's freedom to choose library materials free from censorship.

## II. Internet Services

- A. The Library provides access to the Internet to help meet the diverse needs of its patrons. Internet resources offer a wealth of information that augments library collections. The library has no responsibility for content found on the Internet, including information that may be inaccurate, out-of-date, offensive or illegal.
- B. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the Internet is a forum of free expression, and as such is protected by the First Amendment. The Library does not use filtering software to block access to the Internet or the World Wide Web.
- C. The Library refers patrons to pre-filtered search engines and to web guides that link to pre-selected sites in order to assist patrons in finding the best resources on the Internet. Professional librarians offer regular classes for patrons on how to search the World Wide Web and how to use selected library databases for research over the Internet.
- D. The public may reserve time on Internet stations by phoning or signing up at the Reference Desk. The Library reserves the right to require an ID or library card for Internet registration. All users at Internet stations must agree to the library's written policy as displayed on screens. Children's Library and Branch Library visitors may use the Internet on the library computer catalog stations when the computers are not needed for searching the catalog.
- E. The Library will provide printing from the Internet on a cost-recovery basis. The Library does not provide individual email accounts to library patrons.

## III. Prohibited activities

As a member of the C/W MARS network, the Library follows the policies of the network and of its Internet provider. The following activities are expressly prohibited:

- Using the Internet for illegal purposes, for example, the display of child pornography;
- Using the Internet in violation of the Massachusetts General Law 272 Section 31, the Harmful to Minors statute;
- Unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material in any format;
- Transmission of chain mail, broadcast letters, or junk mail of any type;
- Transmission of threatening, harassing, defamatory or obscene materials. Obscene materials, as determined by the office of the Massachusetts Attorney General, are illegal.
- Unauthorized access to remote computer systems, including so-called "hacking".

#### IV. Privacy

- A. The Library will protect the privacy of patrons in their use of the Internet to the fullest extent possible under the law. The libraries keep no permanent record of the Internet sites visited, the electronic databases used or the searches performed by individuals. Under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 78, Section 7, names and addresses of public library patrons as well as the materials borrowed or information accessed electronically are considered not to be part of the public record.
- B. The library cannot be responsible for any confidential or financial information patrons may send over the Internet. A person's use of the Internet leaves electronic information in the public domain. Internet communications are not private, nor are they confidential.

#### II. System Security

- A. Downloading is not allowed on Library computers. Downloading software and other files could inadvertently harm library computers and be very expensive to the Library.
- B. Patrons must not alter software configurations on library computers. No food or drinks are allowed near the computers.

#### III. Safety

- A. Parents and guardians are expected to set and enforce rules for their children's use of the Internet as well as expectations for behavior of older children in public places. Parents are encouraged to accompany children under 10 years old in using the Internet.
- B. The Library will inform patrons on steps to enhance the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Safety tips will be prominently displayed.
- C. Library staff will provide basic assistance to young children in their use of the Internet in the Children's Library. Internet stations in the AV Department are self-service. The Reference Librarians provide assistance in the use of library computer catalog and database computers in the Reference Department.
- D. Access by minors (a person under 18 years of age) to visual depictions that are obscene is illegal and will not be allowed at the Library. Display of child pornography is illegal at any age. Display of obscene material by persons of any age is not acceptable behavior at the Library.

IV. Enforcement

- A. Library staff will take action to implement this Internet Policy and will report violations of the policy to the Library Director for follow up with the proper authorities.
- B. Minor violations of policy will be addressed by staff intervention to correct misbehavior.
- C. Repeat misbehavior may result in the loss of Internet privileges, until the patron meets with the Library Director to review the Library's Internet policy.
- D. Chronic violations of policy may result in the loss of Internet privileges and Library privileges.
- E. Illegal use of the Internet will be considered grounds for a "no trespass" order to be served to the offender.
- F. The Director may require violators under 18 to have a parent or guardian appear at a conference in order to restore Internet privileges.
- G. Any Internet crime that can be documented will be reported to the appropriate authorities, including the Amherst Police Department, the Mass. Attorney General's Office and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, among other agencies.

Approved by the Board of Trustees June 11, 2002.