

Ames Public Library Policy
Section: Library Resources - Collections
Subject: Internet Use Policy

Board
Approved: 6/96
Reviewed: 11/00, 11/02,
7/05, 11/06, 9/07, 1/10
Revised: 11/00, 11/06,
9/07, 1/10

Purpose

Ames Public Library provides access to the Internet as part of its mission: "The Ames Public Library: We connect you to the world of ideas." The library has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Individuals must accept responsibility for evaluating content. As with other library materials, the library affirms responsibility of parents or guardians to guide their children's use of the Internet.

Responsibilities of the Library

The library has no means or statutory authority to assure that only constitutionally protected material is accessed by the public. The authority to determine what is obscene rests with the Story County attorney (Sec. 728.6, Code of Iowa¹) not with the staff of the Ames Public Library. Public libraries are exempted under Sec. 728.7, Code of Iowa. The availability of information does not constitute endorsement of the content by the Ames Public Library. Ames Public Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through the Internet, or any consequences thereof.

As stated in the American Library Association's Statement on Library Use of Filtering Software² (adopted by Ames Public Library Board of Trustees as a guidance document, 06/05) "...the use of filtering software to block access to constitutionally protected speech violates the Library Bill of Rights"; therefore, Ames Public Library will not impose blocking or filtering software to limit access to Internet sites.

Library staff may equip designated computer stations with filtering software and offer a list of selected web sites that allow filtered searching. However, filtering software has technological limitations; it cannot always adapt to the varying ages and maturity levels of individual users nor guarantee blocking of what some may consider "objectionable" material.

Responsibility of Customers

Privacy in using the Internet in the library cannot be guaranteed. There exists a possibility of inadvertent viewing by others. Customers are urged to respect the

¹ Code of Iowa: containing all statutes of a general and permanent nature. Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1924-

² Statement on Library Use of Filtering Software," American Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee, July 1, 1997; Rev. November 17, 2000

sensibilities of others when accessing information that may reasonably be offensive to someone else.

Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the library is the responsibility of the customer. It is illegal to use the library's computers to access, view, print, distribute, display, send, or receive images or graphics of material that violates state or federal laws, including those relating to child pornography.

Confidentiality

The Internet is not a secure, private environment. Customers handling financial transactions or other activities that require confidentiality do so at their own risk. In general, electronic communication is not absolutely secure and is subject to outside intervention. It is also subject to monitoring by network administrators in the usual performance of their duties.

It is the library's practice not to maintain a history of our customers' computer use. The library will not retrieve any information, including web sites visited, passwords or credit card numbers, or any other information a customer has entered. At the end of the business day, all customer computer use and reservation records are erased.

Library Use of Social Networking Sites

Ames Public Library's social networking sites will be used to inform members about library resources and activities and provide a source for online discussion. Postings on the sites will be reviewed and administered by Ames Public Library staff. Publication of comments does not constitute endorsement of the views expressed by the participants.

Wireless

The library provides free, unsecured, wireless Internet access for public use. The library does not provide personal wireless devices for public use. The library does not provide technical support for privately owned personal wireless devices. Security for personal wireless devices rests solely with the owner of the wireless device. Personal use of the library's public wireless access will conform with policies regulating other types of public Internet access provided by the library.

Expressions of Concern

The Ames Public Library Director and the Board of Trustees welcome feedback from customers. Any customer concerns will be handled promptly and courteously as detailed in the Expressions of Concern Policy.

References

This policy has been developed in concert with the following American Library Association Guidance Documents: "Access to Digital Information, Services, and Networks," "Internet Use Policy and Guidelines," and "Statement on Library Use of Filtering Software."