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# Saint Paul Public Library Policy on the Internet

## Introduction

The mission of the Saint Paul Public Library is to anticipate and respond to the community's need for information, to facilitate lifelong learning, to stimulate and nurture a desire to read in young people, to provide reading materials to meet the interests of all ages, and to enrich the quality of life in the community. The Public Library accomplishes its goals by allocating its finite resources to those materials and facilities that provide serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. It also accomplishes its goals by requiring customers to behave in a way that is conducive to reading and learning by the broadest spectrum of the public, including children under the age of eighteen. In addition, the Public Library does not tolerate the sexual harassment of its customers or staff.

The Public Library now provides expanded Internet access. Customers are advised to exercise critical judgment when using Internet information, realizing that accuracy, completeness, and currency vary widely. Sexually explicit graphics might be displayed causing detrimental consequences including access to these materials by minors, accidental display of these materials to nonconsenting adults, sexual harassment of staff, and degradation of the Public Library as a place for adults and minors to read and to learn. The time taken for this detrimental use of the Public Library's Internet access necessarily reduces or precludes the time available for use that is consistent with the mission of the Public Library.

The Public Library finds these interests compelling. In thoughtful consideration, it addresses these issues by taking into account its interests in: allocating finite resources, providing reading and learning opportunities to the broadest spectrum of the public including minors, respecting its customers' freedom of inquiry, not displaying material that is harmful to minors, preventing degradation of the Public Library as a place for adults and minors to read and to learn, and maintaining a work environment free from sexual harassment. For these reasons and others, including legal requirements (such as the Children's Internet Protection Act - CIPA) and financial necessities, the Public Library has adopted this policy and a Technology Protection Measure (TPM) also known as filtering software. The filtering software determines the appropriateness of each web site request made by library computers. The determination is based on lists and other tools compiled by the producer of the filtering software with adjustments to the lists and tools made by the Public Library staff.

The concerns and recommendations of the customers of the Public Library are always welcome. The *Internet Input/Suggestion for Reconsideration of Web Sites* form should be used to provide suggestions. The form is available on the Public Library web site and at Public Library service desks. This service is expected to evolve in response to the needs of customers. The Public Library regards its customers as partners in this evolution.

## Policy

Customers of the Public Library's Internet facilities must comply with the *Rules Governing the Use of the Saint Paul Public Library* and the *Internet Usage Guidelines*.

Customers of the Public Library's Internet facilities may not use them to display graphics that are obscene or harmful to minors. Graphics "obscene or harmful to minors" refer to some sexually explicit graphics. For the complete definition, please read the Definition of Terms page.

Customers of the Public Library's Internet facilities may not use them for any illegal purpose, for example, software piracy, copyright infringement, or transmission of threatening or harassing materials.

Parents are responsible for their children's access on Internet workstations and should offer guidance just as they guide their children's reading choices. The Public Library provides a menu of sites of interest to children, but the Public Library's staff will not oversee children's use of the Internet, except when the staff is aware that the children's use violates this policy. Parents are encouraged to share with their children *Child Safety on the Information Highway*, published by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

Library staff will disable Technology Protection Measure (filtering software) if requested to do so by an individual (17 years and older) for that session. There is no need to give a reason for requesting that filtering be disabled. The Library reserves the right to ask for photo identification with birth date information to verify age in compliance with the law (CIPA). A customer may ask staff to disable filtering either prior to beginning an Internet session or at any time during an Internet session. Library staff will respond to such requests as a part of normal business operations, that is, as the customer's turn for service comes up. In order to disable filtering, the staff must enter an account name and password on a web page designed to facilitate the disabling process, on the computer being used by the customer. This process may take a few minutes. A secondary window holds the disabling command open as long as the secondary window remains open. Even when filtering is disabled, **Saint Paul Public Library Policy on the Internet remains in force**. Staff cannot disable the filter on non-library computers, including those using the Library's wireless Internet (WiFi) service.

If a customer thinks that a blocked site should be unblocked, or that an unblocked site should be blocked, the Library provides a form that, when filled in and submitted, begins a review process. This process will lead to a determination to change or leave unchanged the status of the site for the Library system. Library staff will assess sites, to the best of their ability, under the following criteria: consistency with Library mission, relation to the concepts defined in the Definition of Terms, relation to the current Library collection, intent of producer, context of images, technical resources used, and programs needed beyond what Library has installed on Internet computers. The Library will respond to the request for reconsideration usually within two weeks.

Customers who violate this policy will be asked to discontinue the activity. If they continue, they will be asked to leave the library facility. If they refuse to leave, they will be considered trespassers, and the police may be called to remove them.

URL: <http://www.sppl.org/userguide/internet-policy.html>

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