COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The Susquehanna County Historical Society & Free Library Association provides access to the Internet and to various computer applications and databases at each branch (Forest City, Hallstead-Great Bend, Montrose, and Susquehanna). These services are made available as part of our mission to offer a wide range of informational, educational, and recreational information opportunities to residents of Susquehanna County.

THE INTERNET

The Internet is an ever-changing global electronic network of computers with very diverse users, materials, and opinions. No central authority oversees this collection of computer networks.

The Internet offers access to many valuable local, national, and international sources of information. However, not all sources on the Internet are of equal value. Some Internet resources contain material of a controversial nature, including sexually explicit material. Errors and intentional misinformation may also be found.

INTERNET SAFETY POLICY

The library uses filtering software on computers that access the Internet. However, no filtering software is perfect: some undesirable information (according to the criteria set up in the filter) will get through, and some desirable material will be blocked. Filtering the library computers is in place to restrict access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web, both in their own use and in exposure to what adults are viewing, and to protect library patrons from

inadvertent exposure to undesirable material. Viewing of certain materials in the public library may be considered improper in time, place or manner. The Library reserves the right to end an Internet session at any time if it is creating a disturbance. Patrons who find that web pages they need to access are blocked should explain their need to a librarian, who can temporarily suspend the filter.

The Library cannot accept liability for the content, accuracy, or currency of the information found, nor the risk of users encountering controversial, inappropriate, or offensive information. Users should evaluate Internet sources just as they do printed publications, questioning the validity of the information provided.

Direct communication via the Internet (email, chat, Instant Messenger, etc.) cannot be filtered. Chat may not be available on all computers. The Library cannot accept responsibility for the safety and security of minors using email, chat, or instant messenging. Parents should discuss online safety and privacy with their children. All users should be aware of the risks of revealing personal information in any context.

Junk email, or "spam," is a constant problem with email accounts. Spam can contain offensive material. The Library has no control over email received by patrons. Free email accounts like Hotmail provide filters to help users deal with spam. If you have questions on how to do this, please contact the Systems Librarian, Cole Williams (278-1881, or info@susqcolibrary.org) or ask a librarian to help you.

OTHER COMPUTER USE

The Library makes available an assortment of in-house computer programs, including Microsoft Office products and games, and hardware. Specific rules may govern use of these resources and/or the computers on which they are installed. The Library cannot be responsible for loss of data or compatibility of programs. If you have specific questions or concerns, please contact the Systems Librarian, Cole Williams (570-278-1881 or info@susqcolibrary.org), before your visit.

ETHICAL USE

Any library computer may only be used for legal and ethical purposes. Examples of unacceptable purposes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Harassment of other users;
- Libeling or slandering other users;
- Destruction of or damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to the Library or other users;
- "Hacking" (unauthorized access) of any kind;
- "Spamming" (bulk email);
- Tampering with computer hardware or software, or violation of computer system integrity, including attempts to alter software configurations or install software;
- Engaging in any activity which is disruptive to other library users;
- Engaging in any activity which is illegal;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information;
- Unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material.

Such actions will result in loss of Internet privileges at the library. Violations will be dealt with in a serious and appropriate manner.

Illegal acts involving the library's computers may also be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.

RULES GOVERNING USE

Internet

All computer users must be registered, either by having a library card (county residents or property owners) or by showing some form of ID. All computer users must sign in at the front desk. Some terminals ("stand-ups") have a time limit of one 15 minute period a day. Users cannot switch from one to another of the 15-minute terminals. Please be considerate of other patrons who may see that the computer is occupied and simply leave. If you need more than 15 minutes, you may use a regular ("sit-down") computer station.

NOTE: If several people are jointly using the workstation, all must be registered. A parent must sign the release form for minors (under 18) in the presence of a librarian.

A user may sign up for one 30 minute spot per day for uninterrupted use. If no one is waiting or signed up, the user may continue to use the workstation until someone else asks to use it, to a maximum of 3 hours per day total Internet use at the Main library, or 1 hour per day at the branch locations. If the user desires to leave and return later in the day, the second session will yield priority to any new arrival. If two people have each used a 30 minute spot, priority is given to the one who has the least total time used that day. Users may move to a 15-minute computer if they are free after being "bumped" from a sign-up computer. Again, please be considerate of other users and of library staff. Some computers have automatic time-outs in place; warnings will pop up at the beginning of a session and at intervals

before the computer automatically logs off. When the computer logs off, all data is erased and cannot be retrieved. Users are responsible for saving any documents they wish to keep on their own media. (see below)

Sign up may be done in person or over the phone. Reservations may not be made more than 6 days in advance.

If you have problems with a computer, such as freezes or "Illegal operation," you must notify a librarian. Do not attempt to restart the computer yourself. Please do not leave a frozen terminal without notifying a librarian, so that the problem can be fixed for the sake of other users. "The page cannot be displayed" is most likely a site being blocked by our filter (see above). Please ask the librarian to temporarily suspend the filter if you need access to the page.

Files and storage media

Any changes made to the public computers, including documents saved to the hard drive, are AUTOMATICALLY deleted on logout. Files that you wish to save must be saved to storage media or emailed to yourself.

 USB drives (also called thumb, jump, stick, or keychain drives) can be used on all of the computers. We have no facilities for burning DVDs at this time.

There is one scanner at each library for public use.

Children's computers

Some computers are earmarked for the use of children only. Adults are not allowed to use these computers alone. Instant Messenger and email are typically not available on these

computers, and only certain sites may be accessible. Please ask the librarian for details. Some children's CD-ROM games may be set aside for in-house use.

Availability

The Internet may not be available due to system maintenance or unexpected system problems. The Library's Internet connection (not under control of the library) may be temporarily closed down for periodic maintenance or due to technical difficulties.

Staff assistance

Levels of technology expertise of library staff vary. Computer hardware, software, and the Internet change constantly, and in many cases staff members are learning to use new resources along with library patrons.

Library staff will assist patrons as time permits, but cannot offer personal instruction without an appointment (ask at the front desk for training availability). Because of library scheduling, staff with extensive technology experience may not always be available.

Patrons who require extra help or training are encouraged to consult the library's materials, or to investigate formal education programs available elsewhere in the community. Patrons should check out: *www.gcflearnfree.org/Microsoft* for online training for Microsoft products.

Printing

The fee for printing is 25 cents a page for black and white laser printing. The user is responsible for the length of documents printed.

A color printer is available at some libraries. The fee is $1 per page. Due to the cost of materials, the user will be responsible for each page printed, even partial pages. Please ask for assistance before printing if you have any questions.

The printer may not be working, or results of printing may not be what the users wants. We cannot guarantee that the printer will always be available, or the quality of the results.

Wireless Internet

Wireless access is provided as a public service free of charge on an as-is basis with no guarantee and no warranty. The library's Wireless network is subject to periodic maintenance and unforeseen downtime.

Information passing through the Library's wireless access is not secured and could be monitored, captured, or altered by others. There are risks involved with connecting to a public wireless connection, such as possible viruses, malware, loss of data, possible hacking/snooping by others connected, possible hardware/software failure. It is your sole responsibility to protect your information from all risks associated with using the Internet, including any damage, loss, or theft that may occur as a result of your use of the Library's wireless access.

- All Wi-Fi users should have up-to-date antivirus software installed on their computers.
- The laptop owner is responsible for setting up their equipment to access the Susquehanna County Library's wireless network. Library staff is not allowed to configure patrons' laptops, nor can they provide more than general assistance in getting connected to the wireless network.

- The Library assumes no responsibility for the safety of equipment; users must keep their equipment with them at all times.
- In using this free Internet access, you agree and hereby release, indemnify, and hold harmless, the Susquehanna County Library, its employees and Board of Trustees, from any damage that may result from your use of this wireless access.
- While using this wireless access, you acknowledge that you are subject to, and agree to abide by all laws, and all rules and regulations of Pennsylvania and the federal government that is applicable to Internet use.
- At its sole discretion, the Board of Trustees may terminate this public service at anytime without prior notice.
- Printing is not available via the wireless connection at this time.   If the user desires to print, the file can be saved to a flash/thumb drive or emailed to themselves and printed from a public computer for a nominal fee per page.
- Any attempt to circumvent library procedures or any unauthorized attempt to access or manipulate library equipment will result in permanent disconnection from the library's Wi-Fi network.
- If you do not agree to the above terms, please disable your wireless connection or turn off your computer.

Copyright

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copyright infringement lies with the user; the Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from such use.

The Susquehanna County Historical Society & Free Library Association reserves the right to modify this policy at any time.