

Acceptable Use of Computers in West Lothian Libraries

1. Introduction

West Lothian public library service is delighted to provide access to the Internet and other information technology to support the leisure, learning and cultural needs of the community.

The Internet

The Internet enables access to valuable information resources in many different formats. The Library Service supports access to information by any member of the public, but recognises that such a resource may be open to misuse and abuse. The following document has been produced in order to safeguard the interests of the library service and the community it serves.

2. The Internet & Your Responsibility

Whilst the Internet contains a wealth of valuable and interesting information, some of this information may be inaccurate, out of date, controversial, offensive and/or illegal.

West Lothian Libraries accept no responsibility for the quality, accuracy or availability of information accessed through the Internet. As a user therefore, it is your personal responsibility to ensure the accuracy of information you discover. West Lothian Libraries assume no liability for any loss, damage or injury, direct or indirect, suffered as a result of using these computer resources.

3. Conditions of Access

Membership

Access to computers in West Lothian Libraries is available to all.

All users will be asked to complete the West Lothian Libraries membership form, which includes a declaration stating that they have read the *lifelearn Conditions of Use*. It is the user's responsibility to be aware of this *Acceptable Use of Computers in West Lothian Libraries* document and agree to abide by its terms and conditions. Those users who have long outstanding fines owing to the West Lothian Library Service will have to pay these before accessing the computers.

Membership cards are not transferable and must be produced at the start of each session, or customers must be able to answer a security question as proof of identity.

Those users who are not library members must complete a registration form to join the library before a computer is made available to them.

Children and Teenagers

Children and teenagers under the age of 16 will be allowed access to the computers provided that a parent or legal guardian has signed a consent form.

Cost

There is no charge for the use of computers in West Lothian Libraries, but there are charges for printing and for buying usb pens.

Booking a computer session

Sessions may be booked in advance, up to seven days ahead, by telephone, online by e-mail, or in person.

Sessions may be pre-booked in hourly slots. If the demand for computers is not high at the time, a session may be extended.

No more than two people may use a computer at any one time, at the discretion of library staff.

4. Your Session in Progress

Library staff will try wherever possible to help users in the basic use of the computers. However, as demand for computer access rises, staff may not always be able to give dedicated assistance. In this case you can arrange a mutually convenient time to return for an induction session with a member of library staff or arrange free computer training in a library with an IT Buddy.

West Lothian Council will monitor access to Internet sites, and any public access of illegal, offensive or controversial material may be the subject of further action.

Monitoring of computer usage will be performed electronically and manually.

5. Security

Filtering

Content viewed over the Internet is filtered for suitability. There is one level of filtering to suit all customers.

Filtering mechanisms can be crude and may also eliminate material that is perfectly acceptable. The Library Service is willing to consider releasing any such site after careful checking, and will let you know our decision within 12 working days. We will also consider blocking sites you feel are unsuitable. Ask the staff for the relevant form.

It is the responsibility of the child's parent or legal guardian to allow, or restrict, use of the Internet, as is the case with all other library materials. Filtering cannot be a guarantee that your child will not access unsuitable material. It is not the responsibility of the library staff to police children's use of the computers.

Virus-checking software does not run on computers, but the hard drive is cleaned each time the computer is switched off. West Lothian Libraries cannot be held responsible for any virus transmission.

Users may not load their own software or connect their own computer equipment to library computer equipment. Exceptions are possible for special equipment to help with general computer use (e.g. adaptive hardware for users with special needs), and usb pen drives.

6. Prohibited Uses

Prohibited uses of the computers

- Accessing, downloading or transmitting material which could be considered offensive, inappropriate or illegal
- Downloading or accessing material which considerably slows the performance of the network
- Distribution of unsolicited advertising or spam
- Attempting to make unauthorised access to other computers or networks
- Alteration of the set-up of the computer hardware or software.

West Lothian Library Services do not prohibit specific online activities as long as they are not considered to be illegal, offensive, obscene, abusive or troublesome to other computer users. However, users should be aware that risks are attached to some online activities:

- Broadcasting personal or private details over the network may lead to the receiving of unwanted mail or unwanted attention.
- Online financial transactions are an increasingly common use of the Internet and are often conducted safely over secure connections. However West Lothian Libraries cannot be held responsible for any losses resulting from sending confidential financial information via the Internet.
- Some online activities (e.g. game playing) can seriously impact on the ability of the network to deliver other services. West Lothian Libraries reserve the right to restrict access to such services.

Users must not interfere with equipment, amend or delete existing software. Any damage to equipment must be paid for.

7. Penalties for misuse

Library staff will direct computer users to remove inappropriate images or text from the screen. In addition West Lothian Library Services reserve the right to refuse further computer access to any individuals violating the membership *Conditions of Use* by accessing or distributing materials deemed to be illegal or unacceptable or having the potential to offend or disturb others. Library staff on site will determine whether any computer activity is unacceptable, and this determination will be subject to confirmation by a Senior Officer of the Library Service.

As well as the loss of computer privileges, other Council disciplinary options may be applied, including criminal prosecution.

In the case of an under 16 user who either violates the library service membership *Conditions of Use*, or who is found through random monitoring to be accessing unsuitable material, the parent or guardian who signed the consent form will be notified.

8. Review

This document will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains timely and relevant. West Lothian Library Services welcome feedback and comment on the content and operation of the guidelines.

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