

Baraboo Public Library Internet Policy

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian:

We at the Baraboo Public Library are pleased to be able to offer a wide variety of materials in print, on CD, on video and audiotape. We select these materials very carefully so that they are current, of high quality, and meet the needs of our users.

We also offer connections to the information contained on the World Wide Web through our computer Internet hook-ups. Through the use of search engines, a user can access a wide array of materials that they, the user, select. As a parent or legal guardian, you need to know that under Wisconsin law, the Library cannot deny access to any of the materials and information available and accessible through the Library, some of which may contain subject matter which a parent or guardian may deem unsuitable for a minor. Because of Wisconsin law, the obligation to supervise, monitor, or control the minor's access to and use of any and all materials and information is the sole responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

If you minor will be using the library computers and accessing information through the internet, we recommend that you discuss with the minor what you deem appropriate use of this resource, which can be of tremendous value, or as any other tool when used improperly, potentially harmful.

Baraboo Public Library Board of Trustees

Internet and LINKcat Acceptable Use Policy

Library Mission

The Baraboo Public Library provides access to a broad range of information and resources through the Internet. We make these services available as part of our mission to fulfill individual information needs for day-to-day living, cultural, educational and leisure pursuits. The Library strives to serve people of all ages at all levels of need and considers its endorsement of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read documents to apply to the use of electronic information. The Library also upholds public access to information in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the United States.

Disclaimer

The Internet offers access to ideas, information, and commentary from around the world that can be personally, professionally and culturally enriching. However, not all sources on the Internet are accurate complete or up-to-date. It is possible that individuals might access information that they find personally offensive or disturbing. The Internet is a global entity that does not fall under the control or governance of any single agency, government, or organization. The availability of networked information via library terminals does not constitute the Library's endorsement of the content of that information. The Library does not warrant information found on the Internet to be accurate, authoritative, factual, timely, or useful for patrons' purposes. If any patron believes that information obtained via Library terminals is inaccurate or offensive the patron should contact the original producer or distributor of the information.

The Library does not select the material on the Internet and has no means or statutory authority to assure that only constitutionally protected material is available on the Internet. The authority to determine what is illegal content rests with the courts as defined in Wisconsin and federal statutes.

Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the Library is the responsibility of the user. In the case of minors, it is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian. Because parents or guardians may feel that information available through the Internet is not suitable for viewing by children in their care, supervision is advised.

Supervising children's use

The public library, unlike schools, does not serve in loco parentis (in place of parent). Librarians cannot act in the place of parents in providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. Baraboo Public Library supports the right for each family to decide what is appropriate Internet use for their children. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians.

The following are recommended guidelines for parents and guardians to ensure that children have positive online experiences, whether at home or in the library:

- Use the Internet as a family. Join your children in Internet exploration.
- Explore the wide range of available information and tell your children about sites that you consider inappropriate for them.
- Encourage children to use sites recommended on the Library's web site and counsel them to avoid sites you consider unsuitable.
- Provide guidelines for your children on the amount of time they spend online, just as for television viewing.
- Instruct children NEVER to give out personal (name, address, password, telephone number, credit card number) online
- Provide children with guidelines on acceptable use of electronic resources, including email and chat rooms.
- Teach children to be good online consumers. As with print information, consider the source, date, and accuracy of online information.

Library assistance

As it does with other library resources, the Library will provide training on electronic resources. It will also make information available to help parents and guardians in their efforts to exercise their rights and responsibilities regarding their own children's use of electronic resources. For more information on children and the Internet see Child Safety on the Information Highway (http://www.safekids.com/child_safety.htm) and Teen Safety on the Information Highway (<http://www.safekids.com/safeteens/safeteens.htm>) jointly produced by the national Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Interactive Service Organization.

Parents and children are encouraged to start their exploration of the Internet with the Library's web site and "Reference Links." There they will find "Kid Friendly Search Engines and Web sites" for children, selected by children's librarians.

Guidelines for computer use

The Library may set limits so that all patrons seeking access will have an appropriate opportunity. The Library reserves the right to end an Internet session when time limits are exceeded.

- Computers are available only during open hours and can be scheduled on either a walk-in basis or in advance.

- Users, eight years or younger, must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, caretaker, or sibling over 12 years of age to use a computer. The child may not be left alone at the library.
- Use of workstations is limited to 1 hour per day.
- Persons who use the computer assume responsibility for the software during their use. Software and personal belongings should not be left unattended. The Baraboo Public Library will not be responsible for injuries or damage to possessions of individuals or groups resulting from the use of the computer.

Legal and acceptable uses

The library's computers may be used only for legal and acceptable purposes. Users of all ages must abide by the following restrictions. Unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Transmitting threatening or harassing materials;
- Libeling, slandering, or maliciously offending, including sexually harassing others library users or staff
- Accessing or displaying graphics or other material that is sexually explicit.
- Disregarding the privacy of others by misrepresenting oneself as another user;
- Attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others;
- Attempting to crash, degrade the performance of, or gain unauthorized access to the Library's computer systems and networks;
- Modifying or damaging equipment, software, or data belonging to the library or other users.
- Exposing children to harmful materials. Sec. 948.11 of the Wisconsin Statutes, among other things, makes it a crime to expose children to pictures or images of nudity, sexually explicit conduct, or physical torture or brutality that appeal to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interests of children; that are patently offensive to prevailing adult standards regarding materials suitable for children, or lack serious literary, artistic political scientific, or educational value for children.

These restrictions also apply in email and chat room environments accessed through library computers. If an individual or group of Internet users creates a disturbance that limits the effective use of the library by others, they will be asked to correct their behavior, disband, and/or leave the building as appropriate. Misuse or abuse of the computers or Internet access will result in suspension of access privileges. Illegal uses of computers may also be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.

Copyright

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Reevaluation of Public Access Computer Policy

This policy supersedes and replaces previously dated policies.

Revised November 8, 2005