

DUNEDIN PUBLIC LIBRARIES INTERNET ACCESS POLICY

(Adopted by Dunedin City Council 17 February 2003)

1. Introduction

The Internet is an extensive and invaluable electronic information resource.

Equity of access to information available on the Internet, as well as in other print, electronic and audiovisual formats is considered fundamental to individual intellectual freedom for recreation, self education, cultural enrichment and informed participation in democracy. The Dunedin Public Libraries will provide free public access to the Internet for information due to the overriding community benefit in equitable access to information.

While the Internet is a key information resource, it is also an effective tool for electronic communication where the benefit is derived primarily by the individuals communicating. While the public library has a role in facilitating access to the Internet for communication, the Dunedin Public Libraries will provide this public access at rates comparable with commercial providers as the benefit accrues primarily to the individual.

As the information available on the Internet is variable with regard to its quality & reliability, the Dunedin Public Libraries will implement the following strategies to assist customers in the effective location and use of the Internet:

- The Library will identify and establish links from sites with authoritative and reliable content as a guide for Library customers. Users will not be restricted to these sites.
- The Library will provide training in the effective use of the Internet as an information resource, and in the use of the equipment required to access the Internet.
- The Library will implement a software filter to block access to Internet sites with explicit content which may reasonably be considered to be offensive.

2. Public Access Internet Services – Conditions of Use

The Dunedin Public Libraries will provide public access to a charged webmail service, a free Internet information service and charged printing facilities at each of its branch libraries.

The level of charges will be determined by Council each year and will be comparable with the level of charges levied by local commercial Internet providers.

Advance bookings for the use of some services may be required. A 10-minute delay in arriving for a booking may lead to the loss of the session. Users must vacate their workstation when their allotted time has expired.

While users of the public access Internet services will be permitted to use their own diskettes and to download files to disk, the Library reserves the right to automatically scan diskettes and files downloaded for computer viruses and to prevent the downloading of any files likely to contain computer viruses.

A range of applications such as Adobe Acrobat, sound & video players, have been installed to assist users to access the Internet content. Users are not permitted to download new applications or upgrades, but are encouraged to make any recommendations for new or upgraded applications to Library staff.

Users who are accessing audio content are required to maintain the volume of the sound to a level, which does not disturb other users or request a headphone set from Library staff.

Users are not permitted to access websites with explicit content, which may reasonably be considered to be offensive.

Any equipment malfunction should be reported immediately to Library staff. Users are not permitted to “troubleshoot” or “repair” hardware or software malfunctions. Users may not install or use their own personal software or peripheral hardware equipment on library equipment.

Unacceptable conduct may lead to the termination of a usage session and a refusal to accept further booking sessions. Unacceptable conduct includes the destruction of or damage to library equipment; software license infringement; behaviour which disturbs or interferes with the usage of other Library customers, the attempted installation of unauthorised software or hardware; violation of the computer system security; attempting to access or display Internet sites with explicit content, which may reasonably be considered to be offensive; copyright infringement; use of the Library public access Internet facilities for illegal or nuisance activities.

3. Disclaimer

The Internet is continuously changing and no organisation has a complete knowledge of or control over its content. Some information on the Internet may be unreliable, out of date, misleading and deliberately or innocently inaccurate. The Dunedin Public Libraries has no control over and can accept no responsibility for the accuracy or reliability of information located on the Internet, or any losses or damages resulting from the use of this information.

As access to the information on the Internet relies on the availability of local and remote computing equipment over which the Library has no control, the Library is unable to guarantee access to any specific site, and can accept no responsibility for any losses or damages for the failure to access any specific site.

As the transmission of data across the Internet relies on copying data to and from multiple servers, the Library is unable to guarantee the security of any personal data or information transmitted using the Library public access Internet facilities. The Library can accept no responsibility for the loss or breach of privacy of any personal data or information entered or transmitted by an individual using the Library public access Internet facilities.

While the Library will attempt to block the transmission of computer viruses, the Library is unable to guarantee that any data transmitted to or from Library public access Internet facilities will be virus free, and can accept no responsibility for any loss or damages resulting from a computer virus received through the use of the Library public access Internet facilities. Users are responsible for ensuring that any important data is backed up and that files potentially containing computer viruses are scanned and disinfected prior to executing.

While the Library will attempt to block access to Internet sites with explicit content, which may reasonably be considered to be offensive, the Library is unable to guarantee that users may not encounter Internet sites with content, which they may find offensive. The Library has a shared responsibility with parents and carers for assisting children in the safe use of the Internet. Parents and caregivers have the primary responsibility for supervising their children’s use of the Library, including their use of the Internet.

Any link from the Dunedin Public Libraries website to any other website does not imply an endorsement of the website or its content by the Library or the Dunedin City Council.