Beecher Community Library
Public Access Computer & Internet Policy

Public Access Computers

Public access computers at the Beecher Community Library will provide patrons free access to the Internet, e-mail, word processing and other software, and online research tools. The following policy has been developed to make our equipment and software as broadly and equitably available as possible.

Use of computers is available only to Beecher Community Library card holders who owe less than five dollars in fines. Special considerations are made for card holders who are minor (see Public Access Computer and Internet procedures).

The library will endeavor to maintain these computers and keep them in good working order. They will be available only during regular library hours. In cases when the equipment becomes unavailable (i.e. for maintenance or repair, library programming, down Internet service, etc…) the computers may not be used and the library may not honor scheduled reservations. The library accepts no responsibility for equipment malfunction resulting in the loss or damage of patrons' work or computer disks.

Library staff may be available to provide basic assistance for public access computers; however, they do not have time to provide in-depth instruction concerning computer usage of specific software usage. Staff may discontinue a patron's use of computer if their misuse of equipment is causing damage to any of the equipment, or if they fail to comply with any terms of the Public Access Computer and Internet Procedures.

The computer user is responsible for any damages to computer equipment. Patrons found to have damaged the equipment or software will be charged for their repair and/or replacement. Deliberate acts to damage computer equipment will be reported to authorities. Patrons who are found to use or operate computers in an illegal manner will also be reported to the proper authorities.

Patrons may not save or download to the computer's hard-drive. Patrons who fail to comply with this rule will lose their computer privileges. Users may save only to their own disks or USB drives. Patrons may not load any of their own software on to computers. Further regulations governing equipment usage are listed under the Use of Equipment and the Internet section of this policy.

This policy may be updated as future needs indicate.

Internet
Electronic Information and the Library's Mission
As part of the Beecher Community Library's mission to provide citizens with access to information, Internet workstation(s) are available for patrons to use electronic resources to find information they need to make informed decisions. As an Illinois library and a member of Metropolitan Library System, Beecher Community Library will seek to provide useful resources through traditional and electronic networking for patrons to benefit from expanded access to information beyond the range of a single library building.

Beecher Community Library uses electronic resources such as the Internet for the following purposes:

1. Access to information resources available via the Internet.
2. Access to shared automation systems that provide bibliographic access to local library collections as well as collections of regional and state libraries.

The Internet as a Library Resource
The Internet allows library patrons to access global sources of information rather than only local resources. Most resources available through the Internet are global and serve to expand and supplement resources available locally within the library. The library does not and cannot control the information content available via resources on the Internet. Patrons should be aware of the following points when evaluating information contained on the Internet:

1. Information accessed via the Internet may or may not be accurate.
2. Information obtained via the Internet may or may not be obtained from a reliable source.
3. Information obtained via the Internet may or may not be current and up to date.
4. Links to information on the Internet are sometimes unavailable and this availability often occurs unpredictably.
5. Some information contained on the Internet may be considered controversial by some library patrons.

Beecher Community Library urges patrons to carefully weigh the information contained on the Internet. Library staff may be available to help evaluate information obtained on the Internet for its accuracy and currency, but may not provide definite approval of particular resources due to the vast array of information available on the Internet.

Beecher Community Library is not responsible for any damages arising from a library patron's use of Internet resources; nor is the library responsible for any liability that may occur as a result of the disclosure of financial or other personal information while accessing the Internet at the library.

Library Patron's Rights
Library patrons have certain rights with respect to the use of electronic information systems such as the Internet. Beecher Community Library will work to preserve and protect these rights, subject to limitations imposed by licensing and payment arrangements with database providers.

Library patrons have the right to confidentiality and privacy in the use of electronic information networks to the extent possible given certain constraints, such as proximity of other patrons and staff in public access settings.

Library patrons have the right to access and read all library service policies and procedures and discuss questions with appropriate library staff.

Patron Assistance and Instruction
Beecher Community Library's staff may be able to provide basic assistance in the use of information networks, such as the Internet, as time and staff knowledge allow. Staff cannot

provide in-depth instruction or perform in-depth research for patrons with extensive information needs.

1. Staff members will assist patrons with initial computer and Internet access.
2. Staff members will assist with basic reference-related Internet searches.
3. Staff members may not instruct computer users in the operation of software programs of Internet functions because of time constraints.
4. Staff members will borrow computer-related instruction material via Interlibrary Loan systems for patrons who request them.
5. Staff member will try to assess computer equipment problems or malfunctions. But may not be able to repair the problems because of time constraints and lack of sufficient knowledge.
6. Librarians, themselves, may access the Internet to provide patrons with answers to basic reference questions if equipment is available and time permits.
7. Staff cannot monitor the sites visited by computer users.

Use of Equipment and the Internet
Beecher Community Library requires that patrons using the Internet do so within the guidelines of acceptable use. The following activities are **not** acceptable:

1. Downloading to the computer's hard drive. **Patrons may not, under any circumstances, save or download any document or program to the computer's C drive, or the hard drive.**
2. Use of electronic information networks for any purpose, which results in the harassment of others.
3. Destruction of, damage to, or unauthorized alteration of the library's computer equipment, software or network security procedures.
4. Use of electronic information networks in any way which violates a Federal or State Law.
5. Unauthorized duplication of copy-protected software or violation of software license agreements.
6. Violation of system security.
7. Behaving in a manner which is disruptive to other patrons, including, but not limited to overuse of computer equipment which serves to limit access to other users (overuse can be demonstrated by repeated daily use beyond the one hour limit) or disruptive noise levels.
8. Use of electronic information networks to access materials that are (A) obscene, (B) child pornography or (C) harmful to minors.

The library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from reproduction of content by any method in any format or any violation of Federal or State Law by patrons while they use the public access computers.

Children's Access and the Internet
Beecher Community Library supports the rights of all library users to access information via the Internet and will not deny use based solely on age. Currently, the library does not filter any of its Internet computers.

This library recognizes that the Internet may contain material that is inappropriate for children. Parents and guardians are expected to come to the library to sign a User Agreement with their children as well as monitor and supervise their children's use of the Internet. Library staff are unable to monitor children's use of the Internet.

Parents are strongly encouraged to discuss issues of appropriate Internet use and safety with their children.

Laptop Computers
The Beecher Community Library designates one area for laptop computer use. This area features a surge protector that must be used to charge the laptop. Laptop users may use the designated space for one hour and longer if there is no wait for the space. Laptop computers or other plug-ins may not be plugged into any other electrical outlet in the library. Laptops may be used in other areas of the library if electricity is not needed.

The library is not responsible for any damages that may arise with laptop use on library premises.

Library Procedures Relating to the Internet
Beecher Community Library has developed certain procedures to assist staff and patrons in the use of the Internet. These procedures include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Time limits for access to allow use of resources by the maximum number of library patrons.
2. Cost recovery for printouts using the library's computer equipment.
3. Restrictions on the use of personal software on library equipment.
4. A registration and use agreement form which must be completed prior to usage and will be kept on file at the library.
5. Rules governing the acceptable use of computers.

Breach of Policy
Violation of any aspect of this policy or library procedures may result in the loss of computer and/or library privileges. Copies of all policies are available upon request from a library staff member. Patrons denied computer access by staff members for any reason may appeal this decision to the Library Director and/or the Library Board of Trustees at the next scheduled board meeting for consideration of reinstatement.

Approved 08/17/2010

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