



**Policy Subject/Title:** PUBLIC INTERNET USE POLICY

**Policy Number:** C/009

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**Responsible Officer:** Regional Librarian

**Authorised by:** Somerset Regional Council

**Authorised on:** 29 June 2009 (Doc Id 407836)

**Review / Amendment dates:**  
27 March 2013 (Doc Id 667004)  
11 July 2013 (Doc Id 711676 / no amendment)  
28 March 2018 (Doc Id 1024321)  
8 July 2020 (Doc Id 1210067)

## 1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to:

- Ensure fair and equitable access to the Internet as an information resource.
- Establish guidelines for acceptable use of the Internet within Somerset Regional Council Library branches.
- Ensure the safety and integrity of Somerset Regional Council's information technology network.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Somerset Regional Council Libraries provide access to the internet for members of the local community and visitors alike. Providing access to information technology, in particular the internet supports the library services objective to enable the provision of information beyond the confines of the library service collection.

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the public internet use policy is to outline the terms and conditions under which Somerset Regional Council Libraries provides internet access to library customers and visitors. The policy also outlines what is deemed as unacceptable use of the facilities.

## 4. SCOPE

This policy applies to use of the Internet from public access computers in all Somerset Council Library branches. Use of wireless Internet access on personal mobile devices within the libraries is subject to the same principles of appropriate use.

## 5. POLICY

Somerset Regional Council Libraries provides public access to internet terminals at each branch together with free Wi-Fi. Users release and discharge Somerset Regional Council from any liability which might arise from the use of the service, including in relation to defamatory, offensive or insulting material or any breach of copyright. Users should be aware that involvement in illegal acts through accessing the library services' internet facilities may be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.

### Conditions of use

Somerset Regional Council Libraries does not control the content of material available via the internet nor does it filter the content.

Somerset Regional Council Libraries cannot guarantee the quality of information on the internet. It is the responsibility of the user to determine the validity, quality, currency and relevancy of the information accessed.

Somerset Regional Council Libraries supports the rights of users to access information of their choice regardless of format. The library service promotes and facilitates responsible access to quality networked information for all users, including children and young people.

For equitable access to computers for all users, there is a total time limit of three hours per

person per day. Computers may be booked for up to one hour at a time.

### **Children**

Parents and guardians are responsible for their children's access to Library resources, including electronic information.

Children under the age of 16 years must have the consent of their parent or guardian before using library computers to access the Internet.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to work with their children in using the Internet.

Library staff are available to assist with children's information and access needs; however the Library does not accept responsibility for monitoring their Internet access.

### **Unacceptable use**

Users may not access the Library's Internet facilities to transmit materials and/or statements that are:

- Illegal, fraudulent or part of any unlawful activity
- Slanderous, libellous or defamatory
- Offensive, obscene, pornographic or in bad taste
- Abusive or threatening of violence
- Incitement to break the law
- Harassment based on age, sex, race, disability or other protected status
- Anonymous or repeated messages designed to threaten, annoy or torment

Customers who infringe these conditions may be asked and may have their Internet session terminated or be denied access to the service. Those who refuse to comply with staff directives may be denied further access to Somerset Regional Council Libraries.

Illegal acts involving the use of Somerset Libraries internet resources may be subjected to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.

## **4. COPYRIGHT**

Users are responsible for complying with international and federal laws protecting copyrighted material.

Somerset Libraries has no liability or responsibility resulting from copyright infringement by users.

When printing or downloading material from the Internet, users should refer to and comply with any copying directives given by the author of the material.

## **5. PRIVACY**

The Library respects users' rights to privacy and does not monitor information or sites accessed by clients. However, Somerset Libraries may be required to provide Internet logs to officers legally empowered to investigate use of the Internet where there are reasonable grounds for that officer to suspect illegal use.

## **6. SECURITY**

Security in the online environment cannot be guaranteed and Internet users are warned that all Internet transactions and communications are vulnerable to unauthorised use. The Library does not recommend using public access computers for purchasing, banking or other financial transactions.

The Library cannot assume responsibility for the safety and security of any transactions carried out on the Internet, including loss of data, funds or identity theft that may result from use of the Internet in the library.

Users are advised to log out of services and refrain from entering sensitive information, such as tax file numbers and banking details, while using library facilities.

## **7. DOWNLOADING**

Downloading files and copying them to an external storage device is permitted, as long as executable software is not opened on the hard drive of public access computers. Note that files are not retained on public access computers.

## **8. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTIVE NETWORKING**

Users are permitted to access email, web-based games, chat and social networking services, but must observe the Library's policy on inappropriate use of public access computers.

## **9. WIRELESS ACCESS**

Wireless Internet access is available from all Library branches for use by anyone with an Internet-enabled mobile device. The Library is not responsible for the security of communication over the wireless network.

Where Library customers or visitors are using their own internet-enabled device, appropriate use of the device is governed by the principles of this policy.

## **10. FEES**

Somerset Libraries provide free access to the Internet, including electronic communication services, as part of its mission in meeting the information needs of the community.

## **11. INFRINGEMENT OF CONDITIONS OF USE**

Users who do not comply with the Library's conditions of use may have their Internet session terminated or be denied access to the service.

## **6. CONTROLS**

This policy may be reviewed at any time, but must be reviewed on or before

## **7. DATE OF RESOLUTION**

This original policy was approved by the Chief Executive Office and adopted by Somerset Regional Council at the