

HARLINGEN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE POLICY

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## **Introduction**

The Harlingen Public Library remains an evolving environment. As such we will attempt to offer our patrons the most current and relevant technology and services available. It is within this context that the Harlingen Public Library offers the public its computers, networks, wireless access, and access to the Internet.

This document constitutes a Library-wide policy for the management of its computers and networks owned and administered by the Harlingen Public Library and the resources they make available. Certain categories of Internet sites are filtered. A current list of all categories, blocked and unblocked, and their descriptions is available from library staff.

All computer and Internet resources available at or through the Library are available for use by the public in accordance with current library procedures. Parents or guardians, not the Library staff, are responsible for monitoring children's access to the internet (see Children's Department Policy).

## **Organizational Purpose**

The Harlingen Public Library's computers and computing services are to be used to advance the Library's goals and objectives. The Library reserves the right to set rules, as needed for these computing systems and their use. The Harlingen Public Library reserves the right to audit networks and individual computers on a periodic basis to ensure compliance with this policy. The demand for use of the Library's computing workstations may exceed the available supply. Therefore, it is necessary to manage these computing workstations fairly and equitably so that all patrons will have an equal opportunity to use the resource. Internet access is not available through the Online Public Access Catalog computers (OPAC). The Library provides a wide variety of licensed databases for public use. The Library will comply with the licenses and agreements pertaining to each of these products. The Library will allow, or disallow, the general public use of these products in accordance with the licenses and agreements for each of these products.

## **Legal Use**

The computing resources may only be used for legal purposes and shall be guided by the following principles:

1. You must respect the privacy of other users.
2. You must abide by the legal protection provided by copyright, especially music, movies, or photographs, and license to programs and data.

3. You must have consideration for the integrity of the Library's computing network.
1. Examples of unacceptable or illegal use include, but are not limited to the following: It is illegal to use the Harlingen Public Library's computers or computing services, including the Internet, for any purposes, which violate United States or local laws; or to transmit threatening, obscene, or harassing materials, or to interfere with or disrupt network users, services or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to: distribution of unsolicited advertising or emails (spamming), attempting to gather personal information (phishing), propagation of computer worms, Trojans, denial of service, etc. and other viruses, and using the Library's network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via the wired or wireless network (hacking).
2. Users may not represent themselves as another person.
3. It is assumed that information and resources accessible via the Internet are private to the individuals and organizations which own or hold rights to those resources and information, unless specifically stated otherwise by the owners or holders of those rights. It is therefore not acceptable for an individual to use or download the information unless permission to do so has been granted by the owners or holders of rights to those resources or information.
4. Malicious or destructive use is not acceptable and may be illegal. Use of our computing facilities in a manner that precludes or significantly hampers its use by others is not allowed.
5. Violation of software license agreement (the installation or distribution of "pirated" or other software products that are not appropriately licensed for use by the City of Harlingen or the Harlingen Public Library and its employees). Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material including, but not limited to, digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books or other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music, and the installation of any software for which the City of Harlingen or the Harlingen Public Library or the end user does not have an active license is strictly prohibited.
6. Providing unauthorized information about, names, or lists of Harlingen Public Library or City of Harlingen employees.
7. Destroying, deleting, erasing, or concealing, City of Harlingen or Harlingen Public Library files or other data.
8. Violation of the Harlingen Public Library's computer system security.
9. Attempts to damage or alter Library equipment or software.

### **Access to Electronic Information Resources**

1. The Harlingen Public Library provides access to state and locally funded electronic (online) information products.
2. Patrons and staff may be issued passwords and other product access information for these products to gain in-house or remote access. Individuals granted such information and access expressly agree as a condition of use to protect logon information and to abide by the terms of usage of the providers of these electronic information resources.

### **Email and Communications Activities**

1. Employees and the public must use extreme caution when opening email attachments received

- from unknown senders, which may contain viruses, email bombs, or Trojan Horse code, etc.
2. The following activities are not allowed:
    - a. Any form of harassment via email, telephone or paging, whether through language, frequency, or size of messages.
    - b. Using abusive, profane, threatening, racist, sexist, or otherwise objectionable language in Email messages.
    - c. For employees, using email to become involved in partisan politics or sectarian issues.
    - d. Unauthorized use, or forging, of email header information.
    - e. Solicitation of email from any other email address, other than that of the poster's account, with the intent to harass.
    - f. Creating or forwarding "chain letters", "Ponzi", or other "pyramid" schemes of any type.
    - g. Use of unsolicited email originating from within the Harlingen Public Library's networks or other Internet/Intranet/Extranet service providers on behalf of the Harlingen Public Library.
    - h. Posting messages to large numbers of other users.

### **Computer Use Guidelines**

1. The Library's computers and electronic services will be available during the Library's normal operating hours, except for periodic maintenance loss of power, or any other unforeseen circumstances.
2. The Harlingen Public Library uses a computerized reservation system to manage access to the public computers. There are reservation stations available on each floor. Library staff is available to provide instruction on the use of the reservation system. Individuals with special needs may request additional assistance to gain access to public computers.
3. A valid Harlingen Public Library (HPL) library card, HPL computer use card, or HPL courtesy Library use card and be in good standing is required to reserve and access a public computer.
4. Use of the Library's computers and electronic services is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Those using the computers and electronic services will have a time limit of (45 minutes) guaranteed assigned, but agree, as a condition of use, leave the public computer when the session has expired. In the event that a temporary manual reservation system is implemented due to an outage or maintenance of the automated reservation system, users agree to follow the rules and procedures of such a temporary reservation system.
5. You may not use your own software programs on the Library's computers.
6. You may save files to a portable storage device only. At no time may files be saved to the Library's public access hard drives.
7. Once a computer has been assigned to a patron, they may not switch computers.
8. A person assigned to a computer, but not making legitimate use of it, will be asked to leave the computer. Automatic shut-off will occur after 5 minutes of inactivity.
9. Only one person can sit with the patron assigned to a computer. This provision is intended primarily for individuals with special needs who require assistance from a second person to use the library's computer services. It will be the library staff's decision to allow or not to allow depending on particular circumstances. Library staff are authorized to reassign computer stations to better accommodate more than one person at a workstation, if

- necessary.
10. Patrons needing to take an online test, online course, seeking employment, etc. must make prior arrangements with reference or periodical department library staff. A minimum of 24 hours prior notification is recommended. All testing must be completed 30 minutes before the closing time.
  11. The library will not be responsible for damage done to user's personal data files and/or personal storage computing equipment, or any non-library computer equipment.

## **Wireless Access**

1. The Harlingen Public Library offers FREE wireless access (aka "hot spots" & "WiFi") at several locations for library patrons to use with their own personal notebooks, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and other devices. These access points are unsecured, accessible only during normal library hours and filtered for inappropriate content. A patron's use of this service is also governed by this policy.
2. As with most public wireless "hot spots," the Library's wireless connection is not secure. It is commonly recommended that you have a virus checker and firewall when using the Internet via the Library's wireless connection. By using this connection, patrons acknowledge that security errors and hacking are an inherent risk associated with any wireless service. Cautious and informed wireless users should choose not to transmit personal information (credit card numbers, passwords, and any other sensitive information) while using any wireless "hot spot." Patrons expressly agree that they knowingly assume such risk, and further agree to hold the Harlingen Public Library and the City of Harlingen harmless from any claim or loss arising out of, or related to, any such instance of hacking or other use or access into the patron's wireless computer or other device.
3. The Library accepts no responsibility for any software downloaded and/or installed, the safety of a patron's equipment or software, nor for damage or loss of laptop configuration, security, or data files, email opened, or sites accessed while patrons are on the wireless internet connection. Any damage done to the patron's equipment from viruses, identity theft, spyware, plug-ins, or other Internet borne programs is the sole responsibility of the patron, and the patron indemnifies and holds harmless the Harlingen Public Library and the City of Harlingen from any such damage.
4. The Library accepts no responsibility regarding the ability of patron owned equipment to connect to the wireless network. Library staff will not change settings on patron equipment. Library staff cannot troubleshoot problems related to your wireless device or assist in making changes to your device's network settings and/or hardware configuration.
5. Laptop computer or other electronic devices users must be considerate of other patrons nearby and refrain from excessive noise including the playing of music on the laptop without the use of headphones. Patrons must adhere to the Harlingen Public Library's Patron Behavior Policy. Patrons not adhering to this policy may be asked to leave the Library.
6. The Harlingen Public Library is not responsible for laptops, electronic devices, or other any personal belongings left unattended.
7. All users are expected to use the library's wireless access in a legal and responsible manner, consistent with the educational and informational purposes for which it is provided.
8. Use of Harlingen Public Library's wireless network is entirely at the risk of the user. The Library disclaims all liability for loss of confidential information or damages, physical or otherwise,

resulting from that loss.

### **Printing/Copying**

1. The Library is not responsible for data loss that may occur while printing.
2. There are no printers available for wireless computer users. Saved files can be copied on a digital storage medium (i.e., flash drive, etc.) and brought to one of the Library's public computers for printing.
3. Only paper provided by the Library may be used in the copier/printers. Patrons may not use their own paper, letter head, stationary, etc. for printing.

### **Printing/Copying Fees**

**10¢ per page for black and white printing/copying**

**25¢ per page for color printing/copying**

### **Sanctions for Violations**

A patron violating these principles of access and use shall be given:

1. First violation, a verbal warning that the person is in violation by his/her actions or conduct and that a record would be made of the incident.
2. Second violation, a verbal warning, the incident noted in the patron's record, and removed from computer use for the day.
3. Third violation within thirty (30) days, a verbal warning and declaration that this is the third such violation and that the patron's privileges of Internet/online access and use is suspended and he/she is barred from such use for a period of thirty days from the date of the third offense.

Violations of the above principles shall be on the following scale:

- The first suspension of Internet/online privileges for 3 violations shall be for a period of thirty (30) days starting from the date of the last violation.
- The second suspension shall be for a period of sixty (60) days starting from the date of the last violation.
- A third suspension, after reinstatement of privileges, shall result in suspension and bar from any computer access and use for a period of one (1) year from the date of the last violation.

The Library Director, or designee, has the authority to immediately suspend and/or bar any individual for any illegal activity or if such is in the best interest of the Harlingen Public Library and the City of Harlingen. The Harlingen Public Library will comply with any legal requests from law enforcement or other similar agencies for logs, archives, email, and/or any other computer use. Harlingen Public Library employees will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination for violation of this policy.