

CRAWFORD COUNTY LIBRARY

Policy Manual

Policy No. 418

Subject: Internet Access Policy

Replaces: Policy 418 Restriction of Internet Access to Minors

1. **Philosophy** – In keeping with the library's mission of being a resource and facilitator for intellectual and cultural growth and lifelong learning, the Crawford County Library System (CCLS) makes the Internet available to the public in all of its libraries as an informational, educational and recreational resource.
2. **Internet Content** – The Internet, as an information resource, enables libraries to provide information beyond the confines of their own collections. It allows access to ideas, information, and commentary from around the globe. Currently, however, the Internet is an unregulated medium. As such, while it offers access to a wealth of material that is personally, professionally and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, it also enables access to some material that may be out of date, inaccurate and offensive. The Crawford County Library is not responsible for the content of information accessed or selected. The Library strives to maintain a computing environment that promotes access to a wide variety of electronic information in an array of formats; however, the Library makes no guarantee that all Internet content and services will function on its equipment.
3. **Privacy** – It is the policy of the Crawford County Library System to preserve the confidentiality of library usage records of its patrons in accordance with the Library Privacy Act as last amended. Unless ordered by a court after giving the library notice of the request and an opportunity to be heard on the request, a library or an employee or agent of a library shall not release or disclose a library record or portion of a library record to a person without the written consent of the person identified in that library record or that person's parent or legal guardian. The Library makes no representations regarding the privacy of information sent over the Internet including e-mail, chat, or instant messaging. Those transmissions are not secure against interception and may be monitored by a third party.
4. **Technology Protection Measure** – It is Crawford County Library System's policy to comply with the requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) (47 USC § 254 and 20 USC § 9134) and the June 23, 2003 United States Supreme Court decision relating thereto, as well as provisions in the Michigan Library Privacy Act regarding restriction of Internet access to minors (MCL 397.606). CCLS uses a technology protection measure (or "Internet filter") to restrict access to Internet sites that contain adult content (nudity and graphical depictions of sexual activity). The filter is designed to not block sex education or health sites. Filtering software is used to restrict minors under the age of 18 to filtered Internet access only. The same software also allows adults to request that filters be turned off with staff intervention to enable bona fide research and

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other lawful uses. In some libraries, groups of computers that are primarily used by children have been designated as always filtered.

5. **Filtering Guidelines** – CCLS uses the requirements of CIPA and Michigan law to determine what the filter should block. CCLS uses the least restrictive blocking categories provided by the filter vendor that by their definitions appear to include prohibited content. Content to be blocked includes obscenity as defined in 18 USC § 1460, child pornography as defined in 18 USC § 2256, and sexual content harmful to minors as defined in 47 USC § 254 and 20 USC § 9134. It is CCLS’s intent not to block sites that address sexuality and the human body in an educational, historical, or medical context.
6. **Parental Guidance** – Parents and guardians need to be aware that the filter is not totally effective and the Library cannot assure that a child will not purposefully or inadvertently access inappropriate materials. The Library does not filter the content of e-mail, chat rooms, or other forms of direct electronic communication and cannot therefore assure the safety and security of minors using these functions. The Library also cannot protect against their children's unauthorized access to computer resources, including “hacking,” and other unlawful online activities, nor can it protect against unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding their children if their children provide it while using the Internet. Parents and guardians need to be actively interested in and responsible for supervision of their children's use of the Internet and other electronic resources. Parents and guardians are encouraged to discuss the use of the Internet and family values with their children.
7. **Complaints and Penalties** – If a user feels that a web site is being blocked or allowed inappropriately by the filter, s/he may request that it be reviewed by library staff. A decision and any necessary action will be made by the Library Director or designee. Inappropriate use of library computers may result in the loss of library computer network privileges and suspension of library services.
8. **Obscenity / Child Pornography, and Related Issues** – All of the above shall be defined and governed by reference to applicable local, state and federal statutes, regulations, ordinances, and case law, as amended.

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