

Devon Library and Information Services **Public Access Computers Acceptable Use Policy**



Access to library computers

Access to the computers is managed by an automated booking system which requires a library ticket number and PIN. Evidence of name and address, or failing that of National Insurance number, is required for library membership (if you are unable to produce such evidence, please speak to library staff). Temporary access is available for those who want to use the computers for a short time as a visitor, for which purpose the user's name is required.

Each person is entitled to use a computer free of charge for up to ½ hour a day. You may also hire a computer for longer if there is one available and you pay the relevant charge before you begin (see poster for charges or ask a member of library staff).

You do not need to book to use a library computer, but you may have to wait your turn, and we cannot always guarantee you access. Free sessions cannot normally be booked in advance. For hired sessions, we can accept advance bookings in multiples of 30 minutes, subject to availability and library opening hours. If you arrive more than 5 minutes late for a booked session, the computer may be made available to someone else.

Staying within the law

The Internet, email and other applications available on library computers must be used for lawful purposes only, and must comply with all relevant legislation. You may be banned from using library computers and / or from using Devon libraries if you misuse the computers. You may also be placing yourself at risk of prosecution if unlawful action is involved. Email and other electronic communications and files are admissible in court as evidence. Do not write anything about anybody that you would not want to be read out in open court. Individuals may have the right to see a copy of information held about them at any time under the Data Protection Act, and this includes email messages.

If misuse is detected, you may be asked to supply or confirm your current address. If you refuse or give a false address, this may, on its own, result in a ban as described above. This information will be used to inform you and Devon library staff of the action taken.

All text, images, audio files and other content items on the Internet or in other electronic works, including CDROMs and DVDs are likely to be protected by copyright. This includes any items hired from the library or purchased by you. Before copying or downloading material, you should check any terms and conditions of use and, if necessary, seek the permission of the copyright owner.

A summary of some relevant legislation applying to the Internet is given at Appendix 1 towards the end of this document.

Monitoring of Internet and email use

Use of the Internet and email services (but not the content of emails) is recorded and monitored regularly. It is possible to identify sites visited and users responsible. Devon County Council reserves the right to inspect any files during investigations where there is suspected misuse.

Filtering

All access to the Internet in libraries is filtered. See the "Young people" section below for details of the different levels of filtering for adult and young users.

Although Devon County Council and its Internet Service Provider make every effort to block offensive sites, the use of filtering software does not guarantee that all such sites will be blocked. If you find a site which you think should be blocked please inform a member of library staff.

Equally, the use of filtering software may mean that some acceptable sites are inadvertently blocked. If you find a site which you think should not be blocked please inform a member of library staff.

Please note that what may be acceptable or unacceptable to one person may not be to another. The final decision on whether a site should be blocked or unblocked will rest with Devon County Council and its Internet Service Provider.

Young people

Devon Libraries offer 3 levels of access to the Internet for young people (under 16):

1. All young people may have access to the Internet "walled garden", which consists of a limited number of sites which are monitored for content and suitability by library staff.
2. A young person whose parent / guardian / legal carer has signed in the presence of library staff to allow their child Internet access may have access to the Internet using the Library Services' Young filter. A much wider range of websites is blocked than for adults. Sites that offer help and information on social issues such as drug use and abortion are not blocked, but those that seek to promote or glorify drug use are. There is no access to email or chatrooms, though some websites do allow messages to be sent from within the sites. A full list of blocked categories is available on request.
3. A young person who is accompanied by a responsible adult while they are using the computer may have full Internet access at the adult filtered level.

Depending on demand, young people may use a computer for up to an hour free of charge for study purposes.

Parents / guardians / legal carers must note that it is not possible to block all potentially offensive sites, and library staff are not responsible for supervising young people's use of library computers. You should set and communicate the standards your children should follow, especially when using the Internet, and responsibility for what your children access remains with you at all times. Before signing to allow your child Internet access, you should read this policy in full, as well as our "Safe Surfing" leaflet, which offers some simple guidance for you to give your children.

Software downloads and uploads

Devon Library and Information Services have adopted a standard desktop system, which you must not attempt to alter. Downloading of data to disk is only permitted within the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, and on the understanding that the download is aborted if your allotted time runs out.

Retaining your work

If you wish to retain your work, please save it to a floppy disk, DVD / CDROM, or USB drive. Disks can be purchased from the library, or you can use your own. Information saved on the computer hard drive may be temporarily available to other users, and the computers will be reconfigured regularly, erasing existing data.

Printouts

Printouts are charged at a standard rate, whether for adults or children (please see posters or ask staff for current rates). This includes any wastage other than that caused by a malfunction of the printer, computer or software.

Audio CDs and CDROMs

If you want to listen to audio material, please use the headphones provided. Not all CDROMs will run on our system, and staff cannot offer help or advice on compatibility, loading or running them. Please remember to remove the disk when you have finished! You may use the library's "for hire" DVDs and audio CDs only if you have paid the hire charge.

Availability of service

Although we aim to make the computer service available during library opening hours, technical or other problems may sometimes prevent this. Devon County Council accepts no responsibility for the temporary non-availability or slow response of any part of the computer service.

Computer viruses, malicious programs and other technical problems

Do not open any attachments from unknown sources. If you receive a computer virus or similar warning, inform a member of staff immediately. Library computers are equipped with virus protection software, but Devon County Council cannot accept responsibility for any computer viruses contracted, for any failure beyond its control, or for loss or damage to material.

Confidentiality / privacy of personal information

Sending information by email via the Internet is insecure, and we advise you to use other ways to send confidential or sensitive personal information. Because library computers are available to all members of the public, it is not possible to guarantee the privacy / accessibility of any personal data, including email messages. We recommend that you leave secure sites as directed and exit the Internet browser at the end of your session. Please respect other people's privacy and do not look at computer screens that are in use.

Information provided via the Internet

Devon County Council has no control over information provided on the Internet, and cannot be held responsible for the availability, content or quality of such information.

Purchasing of goods or services

If you choose to use credit or debit cards to purchase goods or services when accessing Internet services on library computers, you do so entirely at your own risk. Devon County Council accepts no responsibility for any financial or commercial transactions you undertake while using library computers.

Disruptive use of library computers

Please be quiet when using library computers, and do not use your mobile phone. Disruptive use, such as for group game playing, is not permitted. We ask you to respect other people's privacy and not to look at computer screens that are being used by others.

Health and Safety

Advice on using computers safely is provided via posters in libraries and is included at Appendix 2 towards the end of this policy statement. Further information is available on request. Devon County Council does not accept responsibility for any health problems that are said to have arisen as a result of using library computers.

Appendix 1: Legislation

The following legislation applies to the Internet:

- **Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and Obscene Publications Act 1959**
Use of Devon County Council computer equipment for viewing, reading, downloading, uploading, distributing, circulating or selling any material which is pornographic, obscene, racist, sexist, grossly offensive or violent is strictly forbidden. This is irrespective of the legality of material in the country of origin.
- **The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988**
You must obtain the permission of the owner of intellectual property before copying or making use of it. You should assume that all material on the Internet is subject to copyright unless a specific notice states otherwise. Copying includes downloading files or images or copying text into or attaching it to an email message.
- **Computer Misuse Act 1990**
It is an offence to:
 - Gain unauthorised access to a computer (known as computer hacking). This applies to anyone who causes a computer to perform any function, with intent to secure access to any program or data held in any computer.
 - Use hacking skills to commit other crimes.
 - Alter data or cause changes to any software without authority and with malevolent intent. This includes the writing or intentional introduction of computer viruses.

- **Data Protection Act 1998**

This Act applies to obtaining, using and publishing information about identifiable individuals on the Internet. You must ensure that:

- The consent of individuals is obtained before information (including photographs, video images, names or email addresses) relating to them is published or disclosed via the Internet. This is not required if the information has been released into the public domain by the individual, e.g. names of book authors in libraries, or is required by law to be made public, e.g. planning applications. However, individuals should be informed about how their information will be disclosed.
- Published information is accurate, relevant, not excessive, kept up to date and not held for longer than necessary.
- Any information you obtain or publish is appropriately notified under the Act.

Further information is available from the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner's website at www.ico.gov.uk.

- **Defamation Act 1996**

It is unlawful to make an untrue statement, published to a third party, which damages the reputation of a person or company or holds them up to hatred, ridicule or contempt. It need not be obviously insulting. It could, for example, be a suggestion that a competitor is in financial difficulties or is unprofessional in the conduct of its business. Facts concerning individuals or organisations must be accurate and verifiable and views or opinions must not portray their subjects in any way that could damage their reputation.

- **Sexual/Racial/Disability Harassment**

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 make it an offence to discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or disability (or perceived disability). Harassment, such as unwelcome emails or copying of such material from the Internet, is not permitted and could result in legal action against you.

Appendix 2: Advice on using computers safely

For your safety and comfort, please:

- Adjust the height of your chair so that your lower arms are horizontal and your eyes are level with the top of the screen. Your feet should rest on the floor
- Adjust the backrest so that it supports your lower back
- Make sure the keyboard is tilted (use the legs under its back)
- Don't bend your wrists upwards
- Position the mouse so that it is within easy reach
- If there is reflected glare from windows or lights, tilt or twist the screen
- Use the controls beneath the screen to adjust the brightness and contrast if the image is not clear enough
- Try to relax, and type gently
- Don't sit in one position for too long, and look away from the screen to vary your focus. Take short regular breaks

Please tell staff if:

- You would like to borrow a wristrest
- You cannot avoid glare on the screen
- The screen flickers or the characters move
- You notice any hazards such as trailing wires or the screen needs cleaning

