DeSoto Parish Library
Electronic Resources Policy

Mission Statement:

The DeSoto Parish Library is a service institution which seeks to inform, educate, entertain and culturally enrich the lives of all people, from early childhood to senior citizens, through the use of books and other materials, technological innovations, facilities and professional services.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy statement is to promote the responsible, ethical and secure use of the DeSoto Parish Library (DPL) computing facilities and information resources. DPL is committed to providing excellent library service to meet the informational, recreational and educational needs of the citizens of the DeSoto Parish. The DPL works to create an intellectual environment in which patrons and staff are encouraged to use the computing facilities and information resources to pursue educational matters while respecting the public trust through which these facilities have been provided and in accordance with policy and regulations established by the DPL. This policy shall extend to all staff and patrons of the Library. It shall include all computing facilities of the Library as well as all hardware, software and networks operated by the Library.

General Policy:

Computer use is an integral part of library activities. Policies and procedures for gaining access to and making optimum use of Library computing resources are available to patrons at each Library location and on the Library's website. The computer hardware, software, and information resources of the DPL are for the sole use of the staff and registered patrons including those individuals or groups using the facility for any approved purpose. Users of these facilities must comply with the guidelines contained in this policy. Failure to do so may result in revocation of usage privileges.

Individuals provided access to DPL computer facilities and/or resources assume responsibility for their appropriate use. The DPL expects individuals to be careful, honest, responsible, and civil in the use of computers and networks. Those who use wide-area networks (such as the Internet) to communicate with others or to connect to computers at other institutions are expected to abide by the rules for the remote systems and networks as well as those for DPL systems. Be advised that, in addition to being a violation of DPL policy, certain computer misconduct is prohibited under law, and subject to criminal penalties. Such misconduct includes knowingly gaining unauthorized access to a computer system or data base, obtaining electronic services or data without permission, and destroying of electronically processed, stored, or in-transit data.

General Usage Statements:

Electronic mail privileges shall be used in a manner reflecting the same high ethical standards of mutual respect and civility as any other communication medium. Users shall not harass others by sending annoying, threatening, libelous, or sexually, racially, or religiously offensive messages. Users of e-mail are reminded that messages saved on the computer are not a secure medium. The DPL reserves the right to secure, inspect, copy, remove, or otherwise alter data files, system resources, or user files in the regular conduct of its duty to maintain efficient and well run resources, or in the conduct of investigation into the suspected misuse of these resources.

All electronic files and communications (including e-mail) stored or transmitted on the Library's computing resources are records of the DPL. All personal files are to be deleted upon logging off of the computer station. The DPL reserves the right to monitor and record the usage of any computer at any DPL facility if threatening or abusive behavior has been reported and to use the information gained in this manner in disciplinary or criminal proceedings. Users access the library computer hardware, software and documentation at their own risk. The DPL is not responsible for equipment malfunction, loss of data, any damages to the user's disks, data etc. or electronic transactions of any type which are related to the public use of library computer resources.

Confidentiality:

On shared and networked computer systems, certain information about users and their activities is visible to others. Users are cautioned that certain accounting and directory information (for example, user names and electronic mail addresses), certain records of file names and executed commands, and information stored in public areas, are not private. Nonetheless, such unsecured information about other users must not be manipulated in ways that others might find intrusive.

In general, the DPL will treat information temporarily stored on Library computing resources as confidential, whether or not that information is protected by the computer operating system. Requests for disclosure of information will be honored only under one of the following conditions:

*when approved by the appropriate Library administrator;

*when authorized by the owners of the information;

*when required by local, state or federal law.

Patrons who use electronic mail systems should be aware that electronic mail in its present form cannot be secured and is, therefore, extremely vulnerable to unauthorized access and modification.

Responsibility of users:

The following precautions are strongly recommended:

*Computer accounts, passwords and other types of authorization that are assigned to individual patrons should not be shared with others.

*The patron should assign an obscure account password and change it frequently.

*The patron should understand that files temporarily saved on Library computing resources may not be totally secure.

*The patron should be aware of computer viruses and other destructive computer programs, and take steps to avoid being a victim or distributor of these processes.

Ultimate responsibility for resolution of problems related to the invasion of the patron's privacy or loss of data rests with the patron. The Library assumes no liability for loss or damage to the patron's data or for any damage or injury arising from invasion of the patron's privacy.

User regulations:

Users of the computing resources of the DPL agree to use the facilities for the purposes they were intended in accordance with the following statements:

> *Each user must agree to conform to the relevant policies and regulations in order to have continued access to the Library's resources.

> *Each user is responsible for the security of their password and for any computer that they have logged on to the wireless network.

> *Users shall be responsible for ensuring that their files that are not stored on a network drive are secure by backing up their material regularly.

> *Users are obliged to inform the Computer Service Desk of any suspected abuses or security breaches immediately.

> *Users shall be aware of, and abide by, all DPL rules, and also all software licensing agreements and copyright laws.

The DPL neither sanctions nor censors individual expression of opinion on its systems. However, the same standards of behavior are expected in the use of electronic mail as in the use of telephones and written and oral communication. Therefore electronic mail, like telephone messages, must be neither obscene, harassing, offensive nor threatening in any manner. Similarly, messages must not misrepresent the identity of the sender and should not be sent as chain letters or broadcast indiscriminately to large numbers of individuals. This prohibition includes unauthorized mass electronic mailings. For example, email on a given topic that is sent to large numbers of recipients should in general be directed only to those who have indicated a willingness to receive such email.

Acceptable uses of library computers for employees and patrons:

All DPL owned or operated computer systems should be used only to conduct official business. Employees are encouraged to use computer resources to the fullest extent in pursuit of job related goals and objectives. This use may include accessing education and research tools via the internet or using properly licensed software.

Limited, occasional, or incidental personal use of computers including electronic mail and internet access by employees is allowed. However, as occasional usage is permitted, employees should use discretion when using the computer and/or the internet for personal use.

Personal use of computer resources never include:

> *violation of any local, state, or federal laws or regulations;

> *political, religious, or commercial activity;

> *violation of DPL personnel policies;

> *sending or receiving of any discriminatory, threatening or harassing messages;

> *accessing or sharing of sexually explicit, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate materials;

*violation of any intellectual property rights;

*gaining, or attempting to gain, unauthorized access to any computer or network;

*depleting system resources and/or consuming system resources or storage capacity on an ongoing basis.

*intercepting communications intended for other persons;

*misrepresenting the DPL System or a person's role in the DPL System;

*distributing chain letters, accessing online gambling sites; or defamating any person.

*displaying text or images that may be construed as acts of violence, activities of hate crimes, or gang activity, or any act considered unacceptable or disrespectful to others.

In addition, the DPL retains the right to inspect any computer, any files or data sent, received, or temporarily stored, and monitor any or all network traffic in order to supervise, control, and ensure proper operation of DPL computers and networks. There should be no expectation of privacy by patrons or employees. Use of DPL computers should signify consent for monitoring and/or inspection of any data temporarily stored, sent or received by the computer.

The DPL employees and/or administrators will undertake any investigations into suspected violations of this policy, as per this policy of acceptable/unacceptable uses for DPL computers. Computer privileges may be suspended by recommendation of any member of Library Administration while violations are under investigation.

A warning and temporary suspension of a time period to be determined by Library Administration will be issued for the first offense. A second offense will result in immediate suspension of privileges and an administrative hearing with possible permanent suspension of privileges.

Portable computers:

The policies listed above also apply to portable computers. Additionally, use of portable computers and confidential files offsite should be protected from theft or security breaches. This may include using a power-on password and encryption software.

Any breaches of computer security or theft should be reported to the Library Administrator immediately. Users should be aware of the procedures for using both password protection and encryption software before taking a portable computer offsite. Additionally, users should be familiar with the proper handling of portable computers.

Internet safety:

In compliance with requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (NCIPA), the DPL filters all Internet computers. Parents and guardians are responsible for supervising their children's Internet sessions. The library assists parents and guardians who desire guidance for their children's use of the Internet through their technical expertise and guidance. Parents and guardians are directed to the "Child Safety on the Information Highway" produced by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Interactive Service Organizations for assistance on protecting their children.

DPL staff provides guidance and assistance to children, parents and guardians in a variety of areas:

*Reference librarians provide suggestions and assistance in conducting online research and evaluation of Web sites.

*The Library Web site includes a specially designed page for children that contains links to recommended free resources in a variety of frequently requested topic areas.

*Classes and online tutorials are offered to teach basic computer use skills and to assist parent in guiding their children to use Internet resources safely and appropriately.

*Individual help is provided as time permits in the use of applications on DPL computers.

Internet Disclaimer:

Since the Internet is a global electronic network, there is no state or parish control of its users or content. The Internet and its available resources may contain material of a controversial nature. The Library cannot protect patrons from all offensive information.

Parents of minor children must assume responsibility for their children's use of the Internet through the Library's connection. Library staff cannot control the availability of information links, which often change rapidly and unpredictably. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete or current information.

The DPL assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from use of its internet or network server or from its connections to other internet services.

Display and dissemination of sexually explicit materials:

Use of Library computing resources to display or disseminate sexually explicit or sexually suggestive (obscene/pornographic) material in any Library building is prohibited. Violators of this policy will be removed from the Library building and will have their Library privileges revoked.

The quality, accuracy and timeliness of information on the Internet varies from site to site, and sites may be controversial or of a mature nature. The DPL does not monitor, has no control over, and does not accept responsibility for material in other sources on the internet. Library users access the internet at their discretion and are responsible for the results of their searches.

Legal Use:

The public and staff may use DPL computing resources only for purposes that are legal. Illegal examples of unacceptable use include, but are not limited to, the following:

*Harassment of other patrons

*Libeling or slandering other patrons

*Destruction of damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to Library or other patrons

*Disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications

*Unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material

*Violation of software license agreement

*Conducting illegal activities of any kind

Ethical Use:

Library computing resources should be used in accordance with the ethical standards of the Library. Examples of unacceptable use (some of which may also have legal consequences) include, but are not limited to, the following:

*Violation of computer system security;

*Unauthorized use of computer accounts, access codes, or network identification numbers assigned to others;

*Use of computer communications facilities in ways that unnecessarily impede the computing activities of others, such as randomly initiating interactive electronic communications (chat) or e-mail exchanges (spam), overuse of interactive network utilities, and so forth;

*Violation of network usage policies and regulations;

*Violation of another patron's privacy.

Cooperative Use:

The Library endorses the practice of cooperative computing. This includes:

*Refraining from overuse of connect time, information storage space, printing facilities or processing capacity;

*Refraining from overuse of interactive network utilities;

*Refraining from use of sounds and visuals which might be disruptive to others;

*Refraining from use of any computing resource in an irresponsible manner.

Sanctions:

Violations of policies described above for legal and ethical use of Library computing resources will result in the suspension or revocation of Library privileges in the sole discretion of the Library Administration. (See page 6-7.) Illegal acts involving Library computing resources may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.

Any material deemed inappropriate or offensive by library administration will be turned over to the local law enforcement authority.