



COMMUNITY YOUTH LONDON

## Internet Policy 2013 Edition

## **CYL Internet Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

The following policy document is designed to give advice and guidance to anyone wishing to access the World Wide Web using points of access available within CYL properties and service delivery points. It is also intended to unequivocally state CYL's views on use of the Internet both within the remit of its own policies and procedures as well as within statutory and legal requirements.

CYL wishes to promote the use of ICT to advance knowledge for the public good leading to the raising of levels of achievement and the development of active citizenship. However, CYL also has a duty to foster public awareness of the risks to people of all ages who may be exposed to the propagation of computer pornography and other undesirable sites/information that is contrary to proper standards of ethical and professional practice.

### **2. Why have a Policy?**

The Internet, a global electronic information infrastructure, is a network of networks used by educators, businesses, the government, the armed forces and other organisations. It leads to a highly diverse array of information which people access at their own risk. CYL is keen to promote a connected community that is fully appraised of all information relevant to the needs of active citizens of any age. Although schools have some filtering in place to minimise the risk of exposure to unacceptable materials, in the main, Interact access provided by CYL is not controlled in any way.

A Policy on public use of the Internet is therefore necessary to ensure that everyone is aware of what is ethical and morally acceptable, with the stress on each individual taking responsibility for his/her use of the Internet. In the case of children the focus of responsibility must rest with the parent and guardian, and with young people they must be actively encouraged to develop a responsible attitude to use of the Internet, via positive and proactive parental involvement. It is not good enough for those in charge of children and young people to accept their own computer illiteracy as an excuse for abdicating responsibility in relation to their children's use of the Internet.

### **3. Purpose of the Internet and World Wide Web**

#### **The Internet**

This comprises a large number of computers all over the world linked together with cables. In most cases, each of these computers is also linked locally to a number of other computers in a local network. It is possible for someone using one of these computers to access information on any of the other computers.

The system was established for the fast and efficient transfer of largely text-based information around the world, directly from one computer to another.

#### **The World Wide Web**

To make the appearance of information available through the Internet more attractive and to assist people in finding information more easily, it is now possible for special pages of information to contain text, colours, pictures, sound and even video. These pages, collectively, make up the World Wide Web.

Most of these pages include information on the location of other pages on the World Wide Web, and it is possible to follow up links between pages with similar or related content. Moving from one page to another, regardless of where in the world they might be located, is called browsing or surfing the Net.

## 4. Use of the World Wide Web

### Search for Information

People of all ages use the Internet to be able to access information that meets their needs. Increasingly both private and public sector organisations have a presence on the Web promoting their information, services and goods. Items can be ordered electronically and the user can also contact the organisation via e-mail.

### Electronic Mail (e-mail)

This is a way of sending messages from one person to another via the Internet. Each Internet user has a unique e-mail address and by sending a message to this address, the recipient can read the message the next time s/he connects to the Internet

### News Groups

These are collections of messages written for public readership rather than addressed to an individual. Each collection, or group, of messages is about a particular subject or theme. Individuals can reply to these messages, and these replies are also public. In this way it is possible to track a multi-way conversation about an important issue of the day. There are more than 10,000 different topics available for discussion, from specialist science research to support groups for asthma to model aeroplane fanatics.

The rise in interest in the World Wide Web has led to an information tool that can be accessed by anyone using a computer with a modem. If we accept that information is power, the phenomenon of the Internet and the Web can be seen as the most effective way to close the gap between the information rich and the information poor, thus creating a truly socially inclusive society. The benefits and influence of this, when used in a non-threatening and ethical manner, outweigh the inherent risks of exposure to information which is contrary to the morally acceptable mores of society. This Policy is therefore intended to promote and encourage best practice whilst stipulating what will and will not be acceptable to the Governing law of England.

## 5. Acceptable Use

Community Youth London considers acceptable use as follows:

- Access to and use of the Internet is a privilege and should be treated as such by all users of the system.
- CYL provides access points to the Internet for the purposes of searching for information relevant to academic, business or personal interests.
- Quoting the source of any information gained from the Internet, i.e. the web address, in any documents produced.
- Observing the copyright laws.
- Individual users of the Internet taking responsibility for their behaviour and communications network. It is presumed that users will comply with CYL policies and procedures and will honor signed usage agreements.
- Individuals exercising caution and judgment in their use of any materials found on the Internet.
- Parents or guardians wishing to control the materials to which their children are exposed, providing sufficient guidance to their children on how to accomplish this.
- Individuals taking responsibility for any actions taken or messages sent using CYL's Internet access points, during the time they are registered or logged on.

## 6. Unacceptable Use of the Internet

The Internet offers access to many valuable local, national and international sources of information. However, some of this information may be inaccurate, incomplete, dated, or offensive to some individuals. A good information consumer must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of information found.

Community Youth London considers the following to constitute unacceptable uses:-

- Using the network to make unauthorised entry into other computational, informational or communication services or resources.
- Distribution of unsolicited advertising.
- Invasion of privacy of others.
- Making any attempt to damage computer equipment or software.
- Engaging in any activity that is harassing or defamatory.
- Using the Internet for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other rights of third parties.
- Destroying the integrity of computer-based information on the Internet.
- Using obscene language.
- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures.
- Sending or displaying racist, sexist or offensive materials.
- Using other people's passwords or ID.
- Trespassing in others folders, work or files.
- Causing damage to the system by using faulty disks, disks not checked for viruses or changing the set-up of any software or desktop.
- Wasting other peoples time on the Internet.

## 7. Children and the Internet

The Internet has fast become a part of everyone's life. This has many benefits but there is also a negative side to worldwide access to information. Internet censorship is not an easy topic, not least of all because censorship of any kind does not teach young people responsibility, nor does it allow them to make healthy choices. Widespread use of filtering software or the "walled garden" approach to accessing the Internet are strategies designed to deal with undesirable materials, but are not infallible.

It is wise to protect children from stumbling across these materials, but transgressions will occur. The purpose of this policy document is to make clear the regulations to be adhered to for acceptable Internet access, and also the sanctions that will be applied to users of all ages who ignore the regulations.

Parents or guardians wishing to control materials that their children are exposed to are expected to provide sufficient supervision of their children to accomplish this. As many parents or legal guardians may feel that information available through the Internet is not suitable for viewing by children in their care, supervision is advised. All schools are expected to have a policy for use of the Interact by their students, which will include a letter for parental responsibility together with a declaration for acceptable use to be signed by the pupil.

Within other CYL sites the staff will not generally be monitoring or supervising Internet access, other than for length of use. However, if Internet searching results in disruption of the activities on site, or if a young person's behaviour becomes inappropriate when using Internet resources, the local facility staff reserve the right to end that person's session on the Internet. Undesirable materials have different meanings for different people and can range from cruelty to animals, to religious cults to pornography. It is very much a matter of personal interpretation and preference although the majority of adults are mainly concerned with access to pornographic images and violence.

**Where children or young people are found to be in possession of/accessing computer pornography, the parent or legal guardian will be notified wherever possible.** For further information and guidance parents are referred to "Child Safety in Cyberspace" - a short leaflet produced by Education and Community Services available from all local libraries.

## 8. Filtering and Monitoring

Community Youth London recognises that it has a responsibility to protect children and young people from material that is offensive or harmful, whilst at the same time enabling adults to access the Interact as they see fit. However, technical solutions to social issues cannot be expected to be fully effective, but rather one of a number of measures taken individually and collectively. Restricting access to inappropriate material is often the first issue to be tackled by one (or a combination) of overlapping approaches - **Blocking, Approving, Filtering, Rating.**

Schools in the borough use an Internet Service Provider (ISP) who combines elements of all these approaches within the Internet access available to children and young people. However, no filters are completely effective and will either block out information that is required to answer typical reference enquiries or do not block material which would be considered by some people to be very offensive. This is a particular problem for the Public Library Service.

Libraries in the UK have faced legal challenges because they did not use filtering software and therefore exposed some of their users to "offensive material". Other British libraries have been prosecuted because they have used filtering software and thus prevented users from accessing all parts of the Internet.

In Britain the Library Association statement on intellectual freedom and censorship is as follows:

"The function of a library or information service is to provide, as far as resources allow, all publicly available information in which its users claim legitimate interest. Such provision should be regardless of format and include factual and fiction material. The materials, electronic information services, networks and other facilities provided directly or indirectly by the library or information service should be equally accessible to all users. Those who provide library or information services should not restrict this access except as required by law."

## 10. Legal Framework

Copyright Act 1985

Data Protection Act 1984

Obscene Publications Act 1959 and 1964 - It is an offence to publish an obscene article (whether for gain or not) or to have an obscene article for publication or again. An article is any description of article containing or embodying matter to be read or looked at or both. It includes any sound record, and any film or other record of a picture or pictures. A videocassette is deemed to be an article, as are computer disks and CD-ROMs. Under the 1959 Act, publishing includes;

- distributing, circulating, selling, letting on hire, giving or lending
- offering for sale or letting for hire
- showing, playing or projecting

**Post Office Act 1953** - Makes it an offence to transmit obscene material via the postal system. It is assumed that sending computer disks would be an offence under this Act.

**Protection of Children Act 1978** - Covers the possession of pornography where the material involves children under the age of 16.

**Indecent Displays Act 1981** -

**Telecommunications Act 1984** - Makes it an offence to transmit a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character over the telephone line within England and Wales.

**Video Recordings Act 1984**

**Criminal Justice Act 1988** - Section 160 makes it an offence to possess material that involves photographs of children under the age of 16

**Broadcasting Act 1990**

**Computer Misuse Act 1990**

**Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994** - Extends the Criminal Justice Act 1988 to include pseudo photographs. A pseudo- photograph for these purposes is an electronic image which could be data stored on a computer disk or by other electronic means and which called be converted into a pseudo-photograph.