Purpose

The Ricker Memorial Library recognizes that within the Poland community there are groups and individuals with diverse interests, backgrounds and needs. The Library further recognizes and emphasizes that the public library is an institution of a democratic society and was established to serve all of the people in a community.

Electronic information and networking is a new and very rapidly developing area of public and private activity. The Library recognizes that these developments pose new challenges as well as new opportunities for the library board, the library staff, and library users and their families. The Library believes that these challenges and opportunities are best addressed by adherence to the fundamental principles of traditional library use and the principles of a free society. These new methods of receiving information do not change the mission of the Ricker Memorial Library, which is: *"To encourage community members of all ages in their pursuit of life long learning by providing educational, cultural, and recreational materials in a welcoming environment."*

Responsibilities of the Library

Congress and the courts have recognized that there is no single organization to govern, control, or select information for the Internet. Because of this freedom of information, the breadth of information on the Internet, the unstructured and unregulated nature of the Internet, and the unreliable state of filtering, the Ricker Memorial Library cannot control the content of resources available on the Internet.

The Ricker Memorial Library homepage is designed to offer easy and convenient access to valuable local, national, and international sources of information.

Access

The Library does not select the material on the Internet and has no means or statutory authority to assure that only constitutionally protected material is available on the Internet.

The American Library Association's Resolution on the Use of Filtering Software in Libraries states that ". . . the use of filtering software to block access to constitutionally protected speech violates the Library Bill of Rights." However, new developments now impact the Ricker Memorial Library's position on filtering.

Confidentiality

Ricker Memorial Library upholds the right of confidentiality and privacy for all library users.

Users are urged to respect the sensibilities of others when accessing information that may reasonably be offensive to someone else. However, absolute privacy for patrons using electronic resources in the Library cannot be guaranteed. There exists a possibility of inadvertent viewing by other patrons, either by watching the user's screen, or because a user may leave the screen unattended. The Library's "Internet Rules of Conduct" (attached) applies to the behavior of patrons using electronic equipment and resources. Failure to follow these rules could result in revocation of library privileges.

Responsibilities of Users

The Internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population and information content. Though the Internet provides users with a wide array of excellent information, it also contains information that may be inaccurate, outdated, or personally offensive. Library patrons use it at their own risk. A good information consumer evaluates the validity of information found. Use of Internet resources carries with it a responsibility to evaluate the quality of the information accessed.

The availability of information does not constitute endorsement of the content by the Ricker Memorial Library.

Access, use, or dissemination of information via the Internet in the Library is the responsibility of the user. In the case of minors, it is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian.

Supervising Children's Use

The public library, unlike schools, does not serve *in loco parentis* (in place of a parent). Librarians cannot act in the place of parents in providing constant care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the Internet rests with parents or guardians.

The following are recommended guidelines for parents and guardians to ensure that children have positive online experiences, whether at home or in the library.

- Use the Internet as a family. Join your children in Internet exploration.
- Explore the wide range of available information and tell your children about sites you consider inappropriate for them.
- Encourage children to use sites recommended on the Library's homepage and counsel them to avoid sites you consider unsuitable.
- Provide guidelines for your children on the amount of time they spend online, just as for television viewing.
- Instruct children NEVER to give out personal information (name, address, password, telephone number, credit card number) online.
- Teach children to be good online consumers. As with print information, consider the source, date, and accuracy of online information.

Enforcement of Policy

a) Ricker Memorial Library uses a technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access to some Internet sites.
b) An adult (age 18 or older) or a young adult, with a parent or guardian present, may request that a Ricker Memorial Library staff member override the filtering technology for bona fide research purposes.

Approved by the Ricker Memorial Library Board of Trustees: 6/22/2004

June 22, 2004

1. Adult and minor patrons shall not intentionally access material that is obscene, pornographic, child pornography, deemed "harmful to minors," or otherwise inappropriate for educational uses.
2. Minors are advised to use caution in their use of electronic mail and other forms of direct electronic communications, as these forms of communication can expose minors to dangerous situations. Minors should never disclose personal information, such as name, school, address, and telephone number to strangers on the Internet.
3. Internet connections will not be used for illegal activity or to access illegal materials.
4. Internet connections will not be used to engage in "hacking" or to otherwise compromise system security.
5. Library staff may limit use of computer equipment.
6. Installation, downloading, or modification of software on library computers is prohibited.
7. Users will respect copyright laws and licensing agreements.
8. Users will not make any attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files or networks, or to damage or modify computer equipment or software.
9. Prompt payment is required by users who incur charges for printing or other authorized fees.
10. Users must sign up to use the Internet on a next-available-terminal basis. Terminals will not be "reserved" for persons who are not in the immediate vicinity when their name is called, and telephone reservations will not be taken.
11. Access sessions will be limited to thirty minutes, unless otherwise authorized by the Librarian in Charge.
12. Users must end their session and leave the terminal when asked to do so by authorized Library staff.
13. Upon completion of an Internet access session, a user may be required to wait 30 minutes before signing up for another session.
14. The number of access sessions available per day, per user, may be established by the Librarian in Charge: such limitations will be dependent on facility-specific demand in order to provide access for the majority of users.
15. Users will respect the privacy of other users, and will refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others.
16. By mutual agreement, two persons may share one access session as long as their behavior or conversation does not disturb other users or Library staff.
17. Patrons are restricted from Internet chat rooms.
18. It is expected that users of wireless Internet connections respect all rules and policies of the Ricker Memorial Library.

June 22, 2004