

# **The State Library of Western Australia**

## **Policy Statement No. 46**

### **Public Internet Access Policy**

Issued: July 2001  
Amended March 2005  
Responsibility: C:P&E

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to provide members of the public and State Library staff with a clear understanding of the State Library of Western Australia's policy for providing public Internet access, the extent of the service and the conditions which apply to use.

#### **Overview**

The State Library of Western Australia sees the provision of free public access to the Internet as a core service of a State Library.

The State Library provides public access to Internet services to support the following strategic objectives:

- to improve Western Australian's access to global information;
- to help clients use the most appropriate reference services to meet their specific needs; and
- to use information technology to deliver flexible services, support partnerships and to manage our resources well.

Electronic publications are seen as just another information format and providing access to them is seen as a key part of the library's reference and information service. It enables the State Library of Western Australia to provide information beyond the confines of its own collections.

#### **Levels of Service Provided**

Two levels of Internet access are provided to clients from the workstations in the Alexander Library Building.

- Full access to information searching, including the use of Internet search engines and the ability to input any URL, is available from seven workstations. Access to these terminals is time limited and needs to be booked.
- Limited access to information websites which have been selected and evaluated by staff is available from all other workstations. There is no time limit for the use of these sites.

Printing facilities are available from the public Internet workstations for a fee. To maintain security, material cannot be uploaded or downloaded to floppy disk.

Where the facility exists on some databases, clients can e-mail full text articles to their mailbox.

A notice with the Conditions of Use for the State Library's Public Internet Access Service (Appendix 1) will be displayed next to the Public Internet Access Terminals and a copy made available to staff.

### **Use of Filtering Software**

The State Library of Western Australia uses filtering software on its public Internet terminals to block chat/e-mail sites and sites which may contain offensive material e.g. pornography, violence. This decision has been made for two reasons:

- To ensure the best use of the terminals for clients wishing to research information (rather than use chat and e-mail services); and
- To comply with legislative requirements to restrict access to certain Internet content that is likely to cause offence to a reasonable adult and to protect children from exposure to Internet content that is unsuitable for children.

By providing public access to the Internet, the State Library is required to comply with the requirements of both the Western Australian *Censorship Act 1996* and the *Broadcasting Services Amendment (Online Services) Act 1999*. The use of filtering software allows us to comply with this legislation and maintain a duty of care to children, while allowing maximum use of the Internet for information research.

This decision has not been introduced to censor access to information and those people with a genuine information need which is affected by this decision will be referred to other information resources by staff. Clients may also be referred to alternative Internet access providers nearby.

### **Complaints**

The State Library acknowledges that the use of filtering software is not a perfect solution, and it cannot accept responsibility for any material on the Internet which may be considered offensive by some users.

The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA), an independent federal statutory authority responsible for the regulation of free-to-air radio and television, pay TV, digital broadcasting and Internet content in Australia, provides access to the "Cybersmart Kids Online: smart net surfing for kids and their grown ups" at <http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au/>

If clients have complaints concerning Internet content they can contact the Australian Broadcasting Authority through its online helpline at <http://www.aba.gov.au/internet/complaints/internet.htm>

## **Responsibility for content**

The State Library has no control over the content of material available via the Internet and accepts no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from use of its Internet access. Each client is required to make their own assessment of the truth, completeness, accuracy or suitability of Internet information.

## **Privacy**

Access to Internet facilities is provided in a public place and through publicly available facilities, and therefore no guarantee of privacy can be made, either while clients are using the facility or after they have completed their session through access to history files.

All usage of the Internet terminals is logged and may be used by the State Library for statistical purposes. However, no attempt will be made to identify individual users or their browsing activities except, in the unlikely event of an investigation, where a law enforcement agency may exercise a warrant to inspect the Library's logs.

In order to improve services and establish client satisfaction the State Library of Western Australia may from time to time, survey clients who use the Internet service. This information will remain confidential and be used only for the stated purpose.

## **Access to this Policy**

This policy will be made available to clients on the State Library's website, and to staff via the Library's Intranet, Libnet.

## Appendix 1

### Conditions of Use for the State Library's Public Internet Access Service

You are welcome to use the State Library's free public Internet access service under the following conditions.

1. The public Internet service is available for the purpose of providing access to electronic information resources. Chat rooms, e-mail services and ftp (file transfer to disc) are not available from these terminals.
2. Clients must not damage, destroy or modify equipment, software or data belonging to the State Library, nor violate, or attempt to violate, any computer network's system security.
3. The State Library of Western Australia has a duty under the *Western Australian Censorship Act 1996* and the *Broadcasting Services Amendment (Online Services) Act 1999* to ensure that material which is pornographic, offensive or objectionable to other members of the public or staff are not displayed in the library.
4. The State Library has no control over the accuracy, authoritativeness, timeliness or usefulness of the information accessed through the Internet, and shall have no liability for any damages related to the use of the information accessed.
5. These facilities are to be used in a responsible manner, taking into consideration the laws on copyright, privacy, harassment and libel.

Clients who intentionally misuse these facilities, or fail to comply with staff directives on the use of this service, may have their access privileges removed.