The Public Libraries in Minneapolis

The Minneapolis Public Library has a long history with the city of Minneapolis and its residents. In an effort to learn more about the library system and its relationship to the citizens of Minneapolis this paper details the history of the library from its founding to present. Throughout its history the Minneapolis Public Library has held evolving collections, provided important services, and withstood several crises. This paper examines what makes the Minneapolis Public Library unique, as well as the universal challenges of public librarianship. By writing this paper, being a Minneapolis Public Library patron, and talking with librarians at Minneapolis Central Library during my Alternative Spring Break this past March I have developed a strong understanding of the library's operations, mission, standing in the community. It could only be through its own history that the library has developed into the well-loved institution it is today.

1848-1889: The Frontier and Founding of the Minneapolis Public Library

The foundations of the Minneapolis Public Library are similar to the foundations of library systems all over the west. The rationale for establishing the public library in Minneapolis is very similar to the rationale given around the country in the mid-1880s. The public library was viewed as an institution for democracy; educated citizens were better decision makers, which was views as essential for a strong democracy. Libraries were also seen as a form of social control. They were a way to educate the masses to the ways of capitalism and the values of the elite (Benidt). The rationale and events that lead to the establishment of the Minneapolis Public Library parallel the foundation for libraries all across the United States in the mid-1880s.

The first white settlers settled on the banks of the Mississippi in 1848. Minneapolis grew rapidly and in 1859 the first private library association in Minneapolis was founded (Benidt). The library association was created to host a traveling lecturer and the profits from these lectures became the seed money for the foundation of the private library. The private library association "The Minneapolis Athenaeum" was held in the back of a store owned by the first librarian Thomas Hale Williams. In 1860 the Athenaeum contained 300 volumes and citizens could buy a stake in the Athenaeum for $10 a year, a lot of money at the time. This meant that only wealthy citizens would be able to borrow books. The Athenaeum grew quickly and in 1866 they built a two-story building at 215 Hennepin Avenue which housed the collection and a reading room (Benidt).

"In 1872, a suggestion was made at the Athenaeum's annual meeting to have wealthy citizens buy shares that could be put to the disposal of the poor…Here we begin to see the first expressions of the need to extend to the entire populace the advantages a library could afford" (Benidt, 25). In 1886, the suggestions of the need for a public library grew louder. Williams held a meeting of librarians from all over the country in Philadelphia (these meetings would develop into the American Library Association) and heard stories of the successful founding of public libraries. At this same time, the demand for popular reading was also growing and a separate public library was seen as the best way to meet this demand. In 1884-85 a tax was levied on Minneapolis, a library board was established (naming Thomas Barlow Walker a wealthy capitalist and champion of civic institutions its head) and an agreement was reached to build a new building to house

"The Society for Fine Arts," "The Academy of Natural Sciences" and the newly created "Minneapolis Public Library." At the same time an agreement with the Athenaeum was reached that would require the library to house and maintain the Athenaeum collection in exchange for public access to the collection (Benidt). In the summer of 1886 ground was broken at 10th and Hennepin Avenue for the building that became the Minneapolis Public Library.

1889-1904: Establishing a Foundation

The new Minneapolis Public library opened on Monday, December 16, 1889 with a collection of 30,000 books. The total cost for the land and building was $324, 893.57 (Benidt). Herbert Putnam was the first Library Director and would later become the Librarian of Congress. Putnam set a scholarly tone and wanted the library to "engage the minds of the cities people" (Benidt, 50). Almost immediately after opening the Central Library, Putnam oversaw the creation of three branch libraries. The new branches were well attended but there was a debate over how to spend library resources; some people argued that money needed to be spent on the reference materials for the downtown library, while others saw the need to invest money in popular fiction to grow the collections of the branch libraries. Putnam sided with the scholars and a majority of resources during his time at the library went to the downtown reference collection. This debate between scholarly and popular resources has been going on in one form or another ever since. James Kendall Hosmer was the director from 1892-1904 and he closely followed Putnam's path (Benidt).

In 1893 a makeshift children's room was developed. When the library opened the children's materials had been mixed in with the regular in collection. In 1892, several hundred children's volumes were grouped in a corridor in the basement to get the noisy children away from the adult area. This experiment was successful so all of the children's materials were moved to the corridor and a special attendant was assigned. This small space is considered to be the first children's department in the United States. In 1906, a new wing was added to the central library and the first floor was dedicated to the children's department (Docent Manual).

1904-1936: Bringing the Library to Everyone

In 1904, the first Minnesotan and the first woman became the director of the Minneapolis Public Library. Gratia Countryman was educated as a teacher at the University of Minnesota and was dedicated to bringing reading and education to everyone,

> Countryman's philosophy had roots in the statements of her predecessor Putnam, but her manifesto crossed a boundary that Putnam never breached. It stated that the library was more than just an intellectual warehouse; it would be a social force that would intervene in people's lives to improve their welfare (Benidt, 78).

Countryman was a national leader when it came to increasing access to the library and its collections. She place library collections in factories, firehouses, transit stations, telephone stations, correctional facilities, orphanages, shelters and flop houses. She established three special libraries; a business library, a "practical arts" library at a technical institute and a "social service" branch with collections dealing with child

welfare, labor, public health and crime. She also set up libraries in the public schools under the agreement that the public library provided the books and attendants and the schools provided the space rent-free (Pejsa).

In 1915, the library was opened to all residents of Hennepin County and small collections were left at rural general stores and books could be delivered by mail. In 1922, the Hennepin County Library was officially organized with headquarters in the Minneapolis Public Library. Also, in 1922 the first book truck was built bringing a collection of 500 books to 115 monthly stops in the county. By the time Countryman retired in 1936, 23 Hennepin County Communities had formed branch libraries (Benidt).

Countryman also oversaw a massive expansion of branch libraries in Minneapolis and pushed for the development of branches in outlying, poor immigrant neighborhoods. The library took on the responsibility of "Americanizing" these immigrants by providing English classes and books on patriotism, morals, and capitalism. During the Depression, Countryman encountered financial problems like the problems libraries continue to face; library use and circulation skyrocketed while money for the library was severely cut. Countryman led several successful campaigns to secure money for the library system during the Depression because so many people relied on the libraries services. In 1936, due to pension age limits Countryman was forced to retire (Pejsa).

1936-1964: Pulling Back

World War II followed by a mass movement of the middle class to the suburbs significantly changed the funding and usage of the Minneapolis Public library. During this period the public library incrementally pulled out of the public schools and by 1959 the library had completely vacated all public schools giving control of school libraries to the school board. During this time of decreasing use and revenue the library worked to become more efficient. In the 1950s the library closed the business, "practical arts" and "social services" libraries and cut back on many other community programs such as the hospital services. One large chunk of funding that was secured by the library was a bond to fund a new Central library. The downtown library had long-out grown its old building and in 1958 ground was broken in north downtown for the new building. This new location, on the opposite end of downtown as the old building, was chosen to revitalize a part of downtown that had fallen into blight. The new library opened in 1961 and was now organized by subject departments, to make the library run more efficiently and avoid job duplication (Benidt).

1964--1984: Library as Information Resource

A new director, Ervin Gaines, was hired in 1964 and headed a period of growth and controversy at the Minneapolis Public Library. Soon after Gaines was hired the Mayor of Minneapolis challenged the selection policy of the library and threatened cuts because he wasn't happy with the library purchasing "radical underground newspapers." Gaines and other librarians defended the purchase of the periodicals but under pressure they established a new policy that,

> removed [the magazines] from the open shelves; a patron would have to ask for them, and only adults would be allowed to read them. The policy didn't specify at what age a person was considered an adult, and Gaines left that up to the discretion of the staff member, which would allow for

some flexibility in the policy. Twenty-four underground papers were kept on this basis, including *The Village Voice, The East Village Other, Rolling Stone,* the *Berkely Barb, Muhammed Speaks, Black Panther,* and a local magazine called *Hundred Flowers*"(Benidt, 191).

As a result of this controversy Gaines and his staff became more outspoken in defending people's first amendment rights and the library developed the position that it still holds today on free speech issues.

Gaines noted that the role of the library in people's lives had changed a lot. The library had become an important information resource for a lot of people; reference questions soared, people expected the library to have information on current events and the library had become a more dynamic place and less of the scholarly warehouse that people had envisioned for so many years. This renewed public interest in libraries lead to the launch of several new information services and the building of several new branches.

During this same period the Minneapolis suburbs boomed. By the end of the 1960s, Hennepin County had surpassed Minneapolis in population and property valuation. All this growth led to some serious growing pains for both the Hennepin County and Minneapolis Public library systems. The Minneapolis library system was frustrated because Minneapolis-proper had been working on a diminishing tax-base while still providing service to suburbanites who worked in the city and used the library. The library felt that the county residents needed to pay for the city library service they used. The county's argument boiled down to "no taxation without representation" because they had no representatives on the city library board, which decided county library policy. The county also argued that they also needed to spend resources in the suburban communities, not give it to the Minneapolis Public Library. The county system was interested in pursuing a merger but the city feared that the merged library would not serve the best interests of Minneapolis. After lots of back-and-forth, in 1973 the libraries decided to go their separate ways; the Hennepin County Library moved its headquarters from the downtown Minneapolis library to the county's new regional library in Edina. The two libraries soon entered into a Twin Cities metro area wide network of nine libraries that allowed reciprocal borrowing and help distribute state and federal funding (Benidt).

1984--2009: Big Changes

The period from 1984 to 2009 has brought big changes to the Minneapolis Public Library. Most notably, the rise of personal computers, the Internet and digital resources brought major changes to the funding, use and operations of libraries all over the country. In many ways the model of the library as the primary Information Resource in people's lives had been undermined by ubiquity of the Internet in people's homes and workplaces. The Minneapolis Public Library responded to these challenges in a way similar to libraries all over the country; after initial resistance the public library has become the singular destination for public computer and Internet use. The library has now completely incorporated the Internet and digital materials into its daily operations, teaching classes, subscribing to digital content and helping users navigate the reliability of un-edited online content. The fluid nature of the digital revolution means that the library is continuously defining the role of ICT in library and its mission.

Early in this transition the library faced an internal and public relations crisis regarding the uncharted territory between public computing and first amendment rights.

In 1996, twelve librarians at the Central Library issued a formal complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission stating that the library's policy for unlimited access to the Internet had created a "hostile work environment" because of the librarian's constant exposure to pornography on public computers. One of the librarians, Wendy Adamson said,

> that while she was sitting at her workplace and doing her job she would look up and see "horrible" stuff on the screens of nearby terminals. "I'm talking about torture and sex with animals," she said. It was "really demoralizing and depressing." Computer printouts of sexually explicit pictures littered the library, Adamson added. She said she saw some men at computer terminals engage in what appeared to her to be masturbation and that computer users would verbally abuse her when she tried to enforce time limit (Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, 187).

The library followed-up on the complaint with some policy changes, including instituting a "tap-on-the-shoulder" policy that would give librarians more freedom in enforcing obscenity laws. The librarians felt that the policy did not go far enough in protecting them from sexual harassment so they filed a complaint with the EEOC. The internal crisis soon turned into a public relations disaster for the library. A local television station ran an expose style segment on pornography in the library that outraged the public and several members of the city council. At the same time the library was taking flack from First Amendment rights defenders all over the country who felt that the complaint would lead to broad filtering and monitoring of public computer use. The EEOC sided with the complaining librarians and recommended mediation between the library and the group of librarians. The conflict ended with updated Internet use policies, including 30 minute time limits, registration with an ID, publicly located printers, and computers specially designated for children. The library did not implement filter software but the crisis drew national attention and the library struggled to regain its public image as a safe place while also being a defender of intellectual freedom (Library Journal, 2000). (*See Appendix C for MPL Internet Use Policy).*

In 2000, the library won a city referendum for $122.5 million to fund a new Central Library building. The new library was built on the site of the previous Central Library and opened in 2006. The library lobbied for the new building with an argument very similar to the one used for building the previous downtown library: "[The new library will be] part of a national renaissance in urban library construction positioning the new central library as embodying the city's history and traditions while also revitalizing the downtown (Library Journal, 2001)." The old library (opened in 1961) was designed to house 1.6 million books and in 2000 was crammed with 2.5 million items with more than 85% of the collection in storage. The new library designed by Cesar Pelli is a four-story glass and cement building with capacity for 3.2 million items and 275 public computers (Docent Manual).

Ironically, the decade after the approval of the capital referendum the Minneapolis Public Library struggled (and is still struggling) with some of the worst budget cuts in the history of the library. In 2003, the state of Minnesota drastically cut its aid to metropolitan areas, which was the primary source of funding for the library. To meet the budget limitations the library had to cut 30% of its staff members, reduce library hours across the system and close three community libraries. The situation for Minneapolis Public was desperate and in 2007, 34 years after going their separate ways, the Minneapolis Public Library and Hennepin County Library merger was approved. On January 1, 2008 suburban

and urban systems were now operating as the Hennepin County Library. Minneapolis maintained three seats on the eleven-member library board and an agreement was negotiated that public services would remain the same, none of the 800 staff members would be laid off and no library closures were planned. There was consolidation in administration, technical services, human resources and communications (American Libraries, 2008).

The Library Today

Aside from a few expected hiccups, merging the two systems seems to be working well. The current budget situation is still tight but the closed libraries were reopened and hours were extended through funding from the merger and a tax on the new Twins ballpark (Duchschere).

Today, the Hennepin County Library system offers a number of programs, special collections and technology for patrons across the county. The system has some special collections held across the system, such as: world language collections containing fiction and nonfiction books. The library is actively collecting works in fourteen languages. Several libraries throughout the system have Job and Careers Centers which contain books and electronic resources on finding jobs and starting small businesses. The Central Library holds several special collections, including: The Tom and Mari Lowe Folklore and Milestone Collection a reference collection of historical and international children's literature, and United States Patent Depository library which contains a collection of all the U.S. patented inventions from 1790 to present. The Central Library is also a federal depository library. The Special Collections library has the Kittleson World War II Collection, the 19th Century American Studies Collection, the Huttner Abolition and Anti-Slavery Collection and the Hoag Mark Twain Collection. The Minneapolis Athenaeum also makes its special collections available to all library patrons, including: the Minnesota History Collection, The Spencer Natural History Collection, The North American Indians Collection, The Early American Exploration and Travel Collection, The History of Books and Printing Collection, The Heffelinger Aesop's Fables Collection (www.hclib.org).

The Hennepin County Library has an active programming schedule across the system. In 2009, more than 10,500 programs were presented and more than 235,000 children, teens and adults attended library-sponsored programs. Of the 10,500 programs presented in 2009, more than 1700 were classes, attended by more than 13,000 customers (Library Fact Sheet, 2009). The library offers programs for people of all different ages, abilities, education levels, and ethnicities. For patrons with disabilities the library offers an adaptive technology lab, as well as, building and program accommodations. The library offers several ELL and citizenship classes for new immigrants, storytime and summer reading programs for children, homework help, Teen Advisory Board, tech classes, and events for teenagers, and book groups and computer classes for adults, among many other programs.

The library is also committed to providing ICT in all libraries. In 2009, there were an estimated 15.6 million visits to the Hennepin County Library website. There were 1750 public computers in Hennepin County libraries in 2009. Library computers were accessed more than 2.8 million times by library customers in 2009. 145 subscription databases were accessed about 630,000 times in 2009. Friends of Hennepin County Library's Facebook page: 2700 and counting. People who follow the Library on Twitter: 3000 and counting (Library Fact Sheet, 2009).

Conclusion

The triumphs and challenges experienced by the library today are in many ways reminiscent of the Minneapolis Public Library of the past. By examining the history of the Minneapolis Public Library from its foundation to present we are able to see how history informs the present and get a glimpse of how the present will inform the future. Despite political, financial and ideological challenges the Minneapolis Public Library has always strived to identify and serve the needs of the citizens of Minneapolis. Whatever the challenges the

library faces today and in the future, history tells us that Minneapolis Public Library, and libraries everywhere will rise to meet them.

Appendix A:

Tables

Quantitative Dimensions	
Locations Minneapolis:	**15 TOTAL:** East Lake, 2727 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN; Franklin 1314 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, MN; Hosmer, 347 E. 36th St., Minneapolis, MN; Linden Hills, 2900 W. 43rd St., Minneapolis, MN; Minneapolis Central, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN; Nokomis, 5100 34th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN; North Regional 1315 Lowry Ave. N., Minneapolis, MN; Northeast, 2200 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN; Pierre Bottineau, 55 Broadway St. NE, Minneapolis, MN; Roosevelt, 4026 28th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN; Southeast, 1222 4th St. SE, Minneapolis, MN; Sumner, 611 Van White Mem. Blvd., Minneapolis, MN; Walker, 2880 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN; Washburn, 5244 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN; Webber Park, 4310 Webber Pkwy., Minneapolis, MN. (www.hclib.org)
Locations Hennepin County:	**26 TOTAL:** Augsburg Park, Richfield, MN; Brookdale, Brooklyn Center , MN; Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Park, MN; Champlin, Champlin, MN; Eden Prairie, Eden Prairie, MN; Edina, Edina, MN; Excelsior, Excelsior, MN; Golden Valley, Golden Valley, MN; Hopkins, Hopkins, MN; Long Lake, Long Lake, MN; Maple Grove, Maple Grove, MN; Maple Plain, Maple Plain, MN; Minnetonka, Minnetonka, MN; Osseo, Osseo, MN; Oxboro, Bloomington, MN; Penn Lake, Bloomington, MN; Plymouth, Plymouth, MN; Ridgedale, Minnetonka, MN; Rockford Road, Crystal, MN; Rogers, Rogers, MN; Southdale, Edina, MN; St. Anthony, St. Anthony, MN; St. Bonifacius, St. Bonifacius, MN;

	St. Louis Park, St. Louis Park, MN; Wayzata, Wayzata, MN; Westonka, Mound, MN. (www.hclib.org)
Collection:	"More than 5 million books, CDs and DVDs in 40 world languages. Around 1,750 public computers." --www.hclib.org
Annual Budget:	$69.1 million (Hennepin County Library 2009 Fact Sheet)
Staff:	832 Staff (Hennepin County Government Profile)
Usage in 2009:	17.0 million items circulated 5.6 million visits 900,000 reference questions 10,500 programs. (Hennepin County Library 2009 Fact Sheet)
Year Founded:	Minneapolis Public Library: 1855 Hennepin County Library: 1922

Minneapolis Demographics:	
Estimated population	390,131 (Minneapolis Fast Facts 2009)
Ethnicity	White 63.9% Black 18.0% Hispanic 9.5% Asian 4.4% Some other race & two or more races 2.5% American Indian and Alaska Native 1.9% (Minneapolis Fast Facts 2009)
Language Spoken at Home	English Only: 80.7% Spanish: 7.1% Asian and Pacific Island languages: 5.2% Other Languages: 3.7% Other Indo-European languages: 3.1% *Four most popular languages: English, Spanish, Somali, Hmong* (U.S. Census 2000, Demographic Profile)
Income	Median household income: $48,724 Per capita income: $30,825 Poverty rate for all residents: 21.3% (Minneapolis Fast Facts 2009)
Largest Employers	Health Care and Social Assistance: 16% Professional and Technical Services: 11% Educational Services: 10% Finance and Insurance: 10% Accommodation and Food Services: 8% (Minneapolis Fast Facts 2009)

History of Minneapolis Public Library	
1866	Athenaeum building opens at 215 Hennepin Ave
1885	Minneapolis Public Library is founded
1886	Ground is broken for Library
1889	Library building opens at 10th and Hennepin
1890	North and Franklin branches established
1893	Children's Room opens at 10th and Hennepin
1904	Gratia Countryman becomes librarian
1905	First factory station open, beginning of outreach into the workplace
1911	Walker Library Opens
1912	Carnegie grant gives $125,000 for four new branch buildings
1922	Hennepin County Library organized
1939	50th Anniversary of Central Library Bookmobile service begins
1958	Ground is broken on Nicollet Mall for new Central Library
1961	New Central Library opens at 300 Nicollet Avenue
1968	Nokomis Library Opens
1985	Library celebrates centennial
2000	Referendum passed by Minneapolis voters to support new Central Library and improvements to all branch locations
2002	Interim location established at 250 Marquette Avenue
2006	Construction completed on new building, Grand Opening May 20, 2006
2008	Minneapolis Public Library and Hennepin County Library Merge (Docent Manual)

Appendix B:

Photographs

A group of library staff members in 1892. Gratia Countryman is at the top of the pyramid. (Minneapolis Public Library photograph via *The Library Book*).

The 1922 version of "the book truck." (Minneapolis Public Library photograph via *The Library Book*).

The Central Library in downtown Minneapolis on its opening in 2006. (photo from www.wikipediacommons.org)

Appendix C:

Internet Use Guidelines

Policy #1130:
Adopted by the Library Board 17 May 2000
Revised 17 January 2001

The Minneapolis Public Library (MPL) provides Internet access for conducting research, retrieving information, exploring ideas, facilitating communication, and accessing the full array of resources available through the World Wide Web. These are fundamental to supporting continuous lifelong learning for people of all ages. Unlike the selection of library materials on library shelves, however, librarians do not select the offerings of the Internet. Because not all Internet sites are accurate and complete, and some sites may be offensive, library users are encouraged to exercise critical judgment in accessing these sites.

The Library upholds and affirms the right of every individual to have access to constitutionally protected material on the Internet. The Library also supports the right to privacy and confidentiality of library users in accordance with the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

The Internet has raised new challenges for public libraries. Because of its graphical display format, MPL must through these guidelines work to balance the rights of individuals to access information and the need to provide a welcoming environment for people of all ages. The Library is committed to providing its employees and patrons with an environment that is free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, and prohibiting the display of obscene material, child pornography, and material that is harmful to minors and to make every possible effort within constitutional limits to prevent minors from viewing materials that could be deemed harmful.

The Minneapolis Public Library provides access to the Internet at every MPL location. The demand for Internet access, however, exceeds the Library's finite computing resources. To assure fair access for all persons, the Library and its individual agencies establish rules and procedures that regulate the time, manner, and place of Internet access.

Internet Use Rules

The Library provides computer workstations with full Internet access in all its community libraries and Central Library public departments. Decisions on the number, placement, and type of computer workstations at each site are based on considerations of demand, staff capacity, available floor space, electrical/cable access, and budgetary constraints.

The following rules and procedures govern the use of Internet workstations:

• a) Time Limit per workstation: The posted time limit is to be observed at each workstation.

• b) Time Limit per person: One hour per person in each six-hour period system-wide.

• c) Log On: A library card or a temporary Internet access card is required to log on an Internet workstation. Advance log on is not available.

• d) Temporary Internet Access Cards: Temporary Internet Access Cards for short term Internet access are available to persons with proper identification. Temporary Internet Access Cards are available to youth under 18 with a parent or guardian present.

• e) Catalog Only Workstations: Some workstations are designated for use of the Library catalog and its related databases. These workstations are not available for general Internet use.

• f) Special Population Workstations: Some workstations in each location are designated for primary use by special populations of users, such as children or persons with disabilities. Procedures at each location regulate use of these workstations by persons other than the intended audience

• g) Privacy Screens: Privacy screens on Internet monitors must remain in place at all times.

• h) Shared Use of Workstations: No more than two persons may share the use of an Internet workstation at the same time. Study group accommodations may be made with staff.

Responsibilities of Users

All Library users must observe the policies, rules and procedures established by the Library, including the Internet Use Guidelines and, in respect to these guidelines, the MPL Rules of Conduct (Library Board Policy #3008) and Sexual Harassment Policy (#5004). Users at MPL workstations should bear in mind that the workstations are located in public areas shared by people of all ages and backgrounds, and are expected to show consideration for others when viewing Web pages. All library users are expected to respect the privacy of all other library users.

Use of any workstation is for legal purposes only.

No person shall use a library workstation in a way that disturbs or interferes with users, employees or operations of the Library. Patrons may not:

• a) View, print, distribute display, send, or receive images, text or graphics of obscene materials or material that violates laws relating to child pornography.

• b) Disseminate, exhibit, or display to minors materials that are harmful to minors.

- c) Use an Internet workstation to transmit threatening or harassing material.
- d) Engage in any activity that is deliberately offensive or creates an intimidating or hostile environment.
- e) Violate copyright or software licensing agreements.
- f) Gain unauthorized access to any computing, information, or communications devices or resources.
- g) Damage, alter, or degrade computer equipment, peripherals, software, or configurations.
- h) Install software applications.
- i) Use a workstation to conduct a business.

Responsibility and Authority of Staff

Library employees are responsible for implementing the Internet Use Guidelines. Library employees are expected to take prompt and appropriate action to enforce the Internet Use Guidelines, and are authorized to terminate an Internet use session by anyone who fails to comply. Library employees may refuse to provide assistance to a patron if they believe that it will require them to view pornographic material on a computer display screen or in printed form, but then they must immediately request assistance from a supervisor, lead worker, or security staff.

Use of the Internet by Children

MPL respects the responsibility of all parents/legal guardians to guide their own children's use of the library, its resources and services. Some of MPL's workstations are reserved for use by children; displaying of materials harmful to minors is prohibited. Both posted signs and the staff encourage parents, teachers, and caregivers to work with their children at these workstations.

The Library offers assistance and training to help children experience the Internet in a safe and rewarding manner, including providing Web safety tips both in printed form and online and providing links to recommended sites for children.

Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with the Internet Use Guidelines will result in a request from staff to discontinue the activity. Continued violations will result in a request to leave the library facility, and may lead to revocation of library privileges, including the right to visit the buildings and grounds. Repeat offenders or persons ordered from the premises who do not comply may be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing.

Liabilities

The MPL assumes no responsibility for any damage, direct or indirect, that users or anyone else may suffer through MPL's access to the Internet. All public Internet users at MPL agree to hold the Library harmless from any claims, losses, damages, obligations related to:

- Infringement of U.S. Copyright Law governing the reproduction, distribution, adaptation, public performance, and public display of copyrighted material.
- The use and/or accuracy of information obtained from the Library's electronic information system.
- Damage to non-library software or hardware resulting from viruses downloaded via the Library's Internet services.

The Library Board will review its Internet use rules, procedures, and guidelines every six months.

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