

Public Access to Electronic Information Networks Ruppel Library at VanderCook College of Music

Electronic Networks and the Library's Mission

Libraries make it possible for citizens to have access to the information they need to make informed decisions. As a member of the Illinois Library and Information Network (ILLINET) Ruppel Library is committed to networking which represents good public policy by maximizing the use of the resources of all types of libraries. Every library user benefits from expanded access to information beyond the four walls of a single library building.

Ruppel Library and all ILLINET libraries use electronic information networks such as the Internet for a variety of purposes:

- Access to shared automation systems that provide bibliographic access to the collections of the local library and libraries in the region and across the state
- Access to the wealth of information resources available via the Internet
- Access to general and specialized shared licensed databases available to ILLINET member libraries through regional and statewide cooperative programs

Relationship to Other Library Policies

Ruppel Library's Policy for Access to Electronic Information Networks is part of the library's overall policy structure and should be interpreted in conjunction with other existing policies. Copies of all library policies are available upon request from a library staff member.

"Global" Versus "Local" Resources

Most resources available via the Internet and other electronic information networks are "global" resources rather than "local" resources. Ruppel Library does not and can not control the information content available through global resources such as information obtained from outside sources via the Internet. Internet resources enhance and supplement resources that are available locally within a library. Library users must be aware that Ruppel Library does not exercise control over information obtained via the Internet and must keep in mind the following points when evaluating information obtained via the Internet:

- Information obtained via the Internet may or may not be reliable and may or may not be obtained from a reliable source.
- Information obtained via the Internet may or may not be accurate.
- Information obtained via the Internet may or may not be current and up to date.
- Links to information on the Internet may not always be valid, and particular information sites on the Internet may sometimes be unavailable and this unavailability often occurs unpredictably.
- Some library patrons may consider certain information obtained via the Internet controversial.

Ruppel Library urges library patrons to be informed consumers and carefully evaluate information obtained via the Internet. Library staff may be available to assist patrons in making judgments about the reliability or currency of certain types of Internet information sources, but are unable to provide definitive analysis of particular sources due to the extremely large variety and volume of information available via the Internet.

Ruppel Library is not responsible for damages, indirect or direct, arising from a library patron's use of Internet information resources.

Library Patrons' Rights

Library patrons have certain rights with respect to use of electronic information networks such as the Internet. Ruppel Library will work with other libraries in the Illinois Library and Information Network to preserve and protect these rights, subject to limitations imposed by licensing and payment agreements with database providers.

- Library patrons have the right to confidentiality and privacy in the use of electronic information networks to the extent possible given certain constraints such as proximity of other patrons and staff in public access settings.
- Library patrons have the right to equitable access to electronic information networks.
- Library patrons have the right to access and read all library service policies and discuss questions with appropriate library staff.

Patron Assistance and Instruction

Ruppel Library's staff may provide assistance to patrons in the use of electronic information networks as time and staff knowledge permits. Printed and online documentation and instructions are available at or near points of service. Formal instruction in particular aspects of electronic information network use may be available.

Use of Equipment and Networks

Ruppel Library requires that library patrons using electronic information networks such as the Internet do so within the guidelines of acceptable use. The following activities are unacceptable:

- Use of electronic information networks for any purpose which results in the harassment of other users
- Destruction of, damage to or unauthorized alteration of the library's computer equipment software, or network security procedures
- Use of electronic information networks in any way which violates a Federal or State law
- Use of electronic information networks in any way which violates licensing and payment agreements between Ruppel Library and network/database providers
- Unauthorized duplication of copy protected software or violation of software license agreements
- Violation of system security

- Behaving in a manner that is disruptive to other users, including but not limited to overuse of computer equipment which serves to deny access to other users

Library Procedures Relating to Electronic Networks

Ruppel Library has developed certain procedures to assist staff and patrons in the use of electronic information resources. These procedures include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following:

- Time limits for access to allow use of resources by the maximum number of library patrons
- Cost recovery for printouts using the library's computer equipment
- Priority usage for accessing the library's online catalog
- Specific instructions for downloading including compliance with virus protection measures
- Restrictions on the use of personal software on library computer equipment

Breach of Policy

Violation of any aspect of this policy may result in the loss of library privileges.

Adapted from "A Model Policy for ILLINET Libraries" (1996)

Adopted by Ruppel Library at VanderCook College of Music July 10, 2001