

PRIVACY POLICY

The Columbus Public Library (“library”) is in agreement with the American Library Association’s commitment to the right to privacy:

The right to privacy – the right to read, consider, and develop ideas and beliefs free from observation or unwanted surveillance by the government or others – is the bedrock foundation for intellectual freedom. Privacy is essential to free inquiry in the library because it enables library users to select, access, and consider information and ideas without fear of embarrassment, judgment, punishment, or ostracism. (American Library Association, 2008)

The Columbus Public Library also acts in accordance with Nebraska Revised Statute 84-712.05, which states “Records or portions of records kept by a publicly funded library which, when examined with or without other records, reveal the identity of any library patron using the library’s materials or services.”

Therefore, information related to a patron’s identity and use of Columbus Public Library is confidential and can be disclosed to non-library personnel only under certain circumstances.

1. Records that contain information about patrons, the materials or services they have used, internet usage, or the information they have sought, are private and must be treated as confidential information. Access and disclosure of these records to non-library personnel are acceptable only in these circumstances:
 - a. For internal purposes (such as the recovery of lost or stolen library materials and/or fines; library personnel reporting a crime involving the library to law enforcement) the Library Director may grant access or disclose to materials recovery agencies or any federal, state or municipal government agency, including representatives of law enforcement agencies and prosecuting attorneys.
 - b. In all other situations, a valid subpoena or court order (including search warrant) is required to disclose or release library records.
 - i. Law Enforcement requests for confidential information by way of a subpoena do not require an immediate response from the library. The court order to release information that discloses or could be used to disclose the identity of a library patron or their use of the library must be sent to the Library Director or their designee. When the Library Director and City Attorney have reviewed and approved the order, the record(s) requested will be released.
 - ii. Law Enforcement requests for confidential information by way of a search warrant may be executed immediately. The search warrant to release information that discloses or could be used to disclose the identity of a library patron or their use of the library must be given to the Library Director or their designee, who will inform the City Attorney immediately, then provide the information requested.
 - iii. Library personnel may be prohibited by law from disclosing to the patron and other library personnel whose records were accessed, released, or subpoenaed.
2. Photos, videos and recordings that appear on the library's website may be gathered by library personnel from public programs, events, and library spaces. To ensure the privacy of individuals and children, images will not be identified using full names or personal identifying information without written approval from the photographed subject, parent, or legal guardian.

3. Under no circumstances may the public take photographs or audio/videotape without the express permission of any library patrons or personnel who would be within the composition.

See Nebraska Revised Statute 84-712.05: Records which may be withheld from the public.

American Library Association. (2008, June 13). *Privacy*. Retrieved December 28, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/privacy>

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