

Washington County Public Library

Wireless Internet Use Procedure

Washington County Public Library now offers free wireless "WiFi" access to the Internet for properly equipped laptops and handheld computers. When you use wireless Internet in the Library you are accepting the Library's policies on Internet Access and Wireless Access. Please take the time to read these policies before accessing the network.

Advantages

- No waiting for an available PC.
- No enforced time limits . . . connect as long as you like.
- Enjoy roomier workspace in a quieter area of the building.
- Fast access.
- Download files.
- Save your files permanently on your own device.

Limitations

- No printing services are available.
- A Wi-Fi network is less secure than a wired network (see below).
- Signal strength may vary within/without the Library.
- The Library provides access only to Web-based email. For Outlook or other email services, you must connect with your own Internet provider.

802.11e, Also Known as Wi-Fi Your laptop must conform to the "802.11e" standard, commonly known as "Wi-Fi." New laptops often come standard with a wireless interface. These laptops usually come automatically configured to pick up the wireless signal. Older laptops with a PCMCIA slot or USB port can be fitted with a wired/wireless network interface card (NIC) for about \$80 or even less.

Where and When You Can Pick Up the Wireless Signal

The entire Library building is now wireless accessible. The wireless access is available during the hours the Library is open to the public.

What You Will Need

- A laptop or PDA with wireless capability, configured to use the Library's Internet connection (see below).
- Charged battery – the library has some accessible electrical outlets near some tables, but not all. If you find an outlet, use it. But be prepared to be self-powered.
- Headphones if you plan to use audio files.

How safe is Wi-Fi? - Security Concerns

The Internet is a public communications network, which means that there can be untrusted parties between you and anybody you communicate with. Wireless poses the same risks to your personal information that a wired network poses, as well as some new risks. Wi-Fi users need to educate themselves about these risks and take steps to secure their personal information, such as virus and hacking protection. Cautious Wi-Fi users may choose not to transmit such sensitive data as their social security number, credit card information and passwords while using any Wi-Fi "hotspot", including the Library's.

The Library will not be responsible for any information (i.e. credit card) that is compromised, or for any damage caused to your hardware or software due to electric surges, security issues or consequences caused by viruses or hacking. All wireless access users should have up-to-date virus protection on their laptop computers or wireless devices.

Wireless Technical Information

Wireless hardware and software varies as to the operating systems you may use on your laptop, so we can't give you precise instructions. In many cases, you need to do nothing to hook up (just click on Internet Explorer), but you might need to check the following in your wireless software:

- The "Service Set Identifier" (SSID) should be set to "any".
- The "Wireless Mode" should be set to "Infrastructure" (not "ad hoc").
- In Network Neighborhood Properties (right click on Network Neighborhood and click on "Properties") click on the Wireless TCP/IP adapter setting and look at its properties. Ensure that you have checked "Obtain an IP address automatically."
- If you use Windows 2000 or XP and have more than one adaptor, you may have to disable the one you are not using.
- Some adaptors have a physical switch (very small) that must be turned on in order to connect to the Internet.
- Most wireless software has an indicator that tells you a signal is being received. Make sure the link quality and signal strength is both at least "good". If not, move about the room to a location that has a stronger signal.
- Click on your browser (Netscape, Internet Explorer, etc.) and the Internet should come right up!

Please note that the Library cannot assist you with your laptop, card or configuration. The Library cannot accept the liability of handling your equipment.