

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Communities**

Report to:	<b>Councillor E J Poll, Executive Councillor for Economic Development</b>
Date:	<b>06 August 2012</b>
Subject:	<b>Acceptable Use of Computers in Lincolnshire County Council's Libraries</b>
Decision Reference:	<b>02071</b>
Key decision?	<b>No</b>

**Summary:**

Since the introduction of the People's Network in 2000 Lincolnshire County Council's Libraries have had an Acceptable Use of Computers Policy that governs access to information technology facilities (IT) within its libraries. The current policy dates from 2009, but needs to be updated to take into account the recent introduction of wireless technology (wi-fi) in 15 of the County Council's libraries and the excessive uploading and downloading of data by a minority of library users which can affect connectivity for other users.

**Recommendation(s):**

The proposed policy is adopted.

**Alternatives Considered:**

1. The existing policy remains unchanged. This would not deal with the excessive uploads or downloads or set out the council's position in relation to the use of users own equipment via the library service's wi-fi network.

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

The proposed policy makes it clear that the County Council is not liable for downloads to users' personal equipment whilst using LCC wi-fi connectivity.

It enables the council to limit the speed of connection at periods of high demand to ensure access to basic levels of connectivity for the majority of users.

Without these actions, the council's responsibility for virus or malware downloads to personal IT equipment may be open to question and users may face slow connectivity at peak times.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Since the introduction of computers to Lincolnshire's libraries internet access has been a free service with few limitations on levels of use and has provided a basic level of access for accessing emails, browsing the internet and uploading or downloading word files and other documents. In recent times, the lack of limitations on upload/ download sizes has led to users uploading significant file sizes to the internet, affecting the speed of connectivity for other IT users in the library and resulting in some negative feedback.
- 1.2 The recent introduction of wireless technology in 15 of the authority's libraries has enabled library users to access the internet using their own laptops and mobile phones as well as through council owned Peoples Network computers. The new policy makes it clear that whilst the council takes measures to avoid computer viruses or malware being downloaded to its own equipment, users will have to take responsibility for downloads to their own equipment over the wi-fi system in libraries.
- 1.3 The policy is displayed to library computer users each time they log on to a People's Network Computer or access the wi-fi system.

## **2. The Proposed Acceptable Use of Computers in Lincolnshire County Council's Libraries**

- 2.1 This policy has been produced to safeguard the interests of everyone using computer equipment or accessing the internet within County Council operated Libraries. Use of computers in Libraries is strictly subject to acceptance of this policy.
- 2.2 Please confirm your agreement to this policy by ticking the box (Library Computer) or entering your email address (Wireless Network).

### **Terms of Service**

- 2.3 Lincolnshire County Council's Libraries provide a basic level of service on a free to use basis. It is intended that the service provided is sufficient to perform most general internet browsing and small file uploading and downloading activity, but we do not guarantee any level of service provision.
- 2.4 The speed of connection may be limited at periods of high demand to give as many users a low level of service rather than preventing usage by some users.
- 2.5 We accept no responsibility for the quality, accuracy or availability of information accessed through the internet.
- 2.6 We assume no liability for any loss, damage or injury, direct or indirect, suffered as a result of using the provided computer equipment and/or internet access. We accept no liability if any computer virus or malware

affects the hardware or software of the user.

- 2.7 We reserve the right to monitor all internet access and usage of our publicly accessible computers and wi-fi networks including software applications and internet browsing.
- 2.8 We reserve the right to take further action, such as refusing access to the use of the computers or wi-fi connectivity, in respect of any individuals that have not or are not complying with this policy.

### **Internet Safeguards**

- 2.9 Internet filtering, anti-virus protection and file blocking has been implemented on our networks which are accessed by the public. The safeguards that have been implemented by Lincolnshire County Council are intended to give a basic level of protection to all users, and whilst we endeavour to ensure compliance, users are expected to use the service within the intended safeguards.
- 2.10 Certain site classifications are blocked using our internet filtering software (such as Gambling, Pornography and Illegal Activity) and may include sites not previously accessed using the computer network. The categories blocked may change over time; however users are able to request that certain sites are released from filtering. Please ask a member of staff for more information.
- 2.11 Certain file types may be blocked to prevent downloading. This has been implemented to improve security and to provide protection to users of Lincolnshire Library services.
- 2.12 Lincolnshire County Council cannot guarantee that the implemented safeguards will be 100% successful. You must ensure that you only access sites and documents that are both safe and lawful.

### **Users under 16 years of age**

- 2.13 Children and young people under the age of 16 are allowed access to the internet.
- 2.14 Parents or carers are responsible for children and young peoples' use of all library materials, including the internet.
- 2.15 A Home Office leaflet, 'Keeping your child safe on the internet' is available in all libraries.

### **Your responsibility (over 16s and parent/carers of under 16s)**

- 2.16 The use of computers for viewing live TV broadcasts is not allowed.

- 2.17 Information may be uploaded and downloaded using CD ROMs, mobile devices, digital cameras and USB memory sticks subject to the conditions stated within this policy. You are responsible for ensuring that these are not infected with any malware.
- 2.18 You will be liable for clear-up and replacement costs if you download, install or otherwise infect our hardware with any malware.
- 2.19 You are responsible for all downloads and activity undertaken, whether intentional or not, performed on any equipment whether it is yours or Lincolnshire County Council's.
- 2.20 You must not damage or attempt to damage, either physically or electronically any computer hardware, peripheral (such as a printer) or software belonging to Lincolnshire County Council.
- 2.21 You must not interfere with equipment, amend or delete existing software.
- 2.22 Activity considered to be potentially illegal, offensive, obscene, abusive or troublesome to other computer users is not allowed.
- 2.23 Accessing or distributing material deemed illegal, unacceptable or having the potential to offend/disturb others is not allowed.

### **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 The proposed policy makes the County Council's position clear to all users of People's Network computers and the wi-fi system in libraries.

#### **3. Legal Comments:**

The Executive Councillor has the remit to approve the proposed policy provided he has the delegated authority of the Leader.

#### **4. Resource Comments:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **5. Consultation**

#### **a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?**

n/a

#### **b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?**

Yes

**c) Scrutiny Comments**

This has not been considered by a scrutiny committee.

**d) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

n/a

**6. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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