Thomas Crane Public Library

Privacy Policy

Policy Statement

The Thomas Crane Public Library recognizes that library users must not feel constrained in their use of library resources because they fear invasion of personal privacy. The existence of such a possibility inhibits the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association and is contrary to the Constitution of the United States of America, the General Laws of Massachusetts and the American Library Association's Code of Ethics.

The Library is committed to protecting the privacy of its users regarding information sought or received and materials consulted or borrowed, including database and Internet search records, circulation and interlibrary loan records, reference questions, and other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities or services.

Legal Background

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, Section 7, mandates the confidentiality of library records, stating "That part of the records of a public library which reveals the identity and intellectual pursuits of a person using such library shall not be a public record."

The USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-56) expands the federal government's authority for access to library records and documents to protect against international terrorism and clandestine intelligence activities. This law prohibits library workers from informing anyone, including the library user, if federal agents have sought or obtained records about a user.

Definitions

The phrase *personally identifiable information* means any information that could reasonably be used to identify a library user, including name, address, e-mail address, library card number, or any combination of information that could be used to identify a user.

Library records include but are not limited to records in any format related to library card or program registration, the circulation of library materials, computer database or Internet searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference questions, and reserve requests.

Regulations

Collection of Personal Information

1. The Library collects personally identifiable information about its users only for the purpose of providing or improving library services. The Library does not rent or sell any information about its users and will not disclose any information except as stated below.

Disclosure of Library Records

The Library will not disclose library records to any agency of local, state, or federal government, or to any individual, except for the following:

2. At the request of or with the consent of the individual user who is the subject of the record or information, or upon presentation of a user's library card.

3. In accordance with such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized by federal, state or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power.

4. For the purposes of interlibrary cooperation and coordination, and for library administrative purposes.

Circulation Records

5. Library materials are circulated electronically via the Old Colony Library Network (OCLN) automated system. The information collected by this system is limited to what is necessary or useful to conduct library business. Personal information gathered such as name, address, telephone number and e-mail address are for the purpose of identification and accountability for use of library materials. Records of use (e.g. amount of or titles of materials checked out and returned or services used) are maintained only for the purpose of statistics.

6. In accordance with its Record Retention Policy, OCLN tracks materials on reserve for library users or currently checked out, and retains this information for up to two months (60 days) once an item is returned and all fines and/or fees are paid. After two months, the link between a user and the material used is broken, unless there are outstanding charges on a user's account.

7. The OCLN system uses both a library card number and a PIN (personal identification number) to protect the privacy of users' circulation records. The Library encourages every user to keep his or her library card in a secure place, to change the default PIN to one known only to the user, and to report a lost library card to the Library immediately.

8. The OCLN online catalog allows users to have the items they've borrowed displayed in a list called "My Favorites." If a user chooses this option, OCLN will display a list of items users have borrowed as "My Favorites." Items recorded as "My Favorites" are deleted after 180 days. Users who have chosen to use "My Favorites" may disable it at any time. However, even if the "My Favorites" display is disabled, the link between the user and the material used is still retained by the OCLN system for up to six months (180 days).

Interlibrary Loan Records

Users may borrow items not owned by any OCLN libraries by placing direct electronic requests via the Massachusetts Virtual Catalog or by submitting requests to the Library's Interlibrary Loan Department.

Virtual Catalog

9. Virtual Catalog transactions are conducted via the OCLN automated circulation system and the Virtual Catalog automated system. The Virtual Catalog system tracks only active requests; once an item has been returned and the transaction is complete, all electronic records of the request are deleted within 48 hours. The OCLN system retains Virtual Catalog transaction information for up to two months (60) days after an item is returned and all fines and/or fees are paid.

Interlibrary Loan

10. Interlibrary Loan transactions may include both paper and electronic records that include personally identifiable user information. Once an item has been borrowed and returned and all fines and/or fees are paid, all local Library electronic and paper records are deleted or destroyed. The OCLN automated circulation system retains Interlibrary Loan transaction information for up to two months (60 days) after an item is returned and all fines and/or fees are paid.

Reference Records

11. A reference interview occurs when a library user looking for information approaches a Library staff member and the staff questions or interviews the user to determine what the user needs and how best to supply the information. Reference interviews can occur in person, by phone, via e-mail or online. Paper and e-mail records containing personally identifiable information are destroyed or deleted as soon as the requested information is supplied. Reference interviews conducted online via the MassAnswers 24/7 reference service are subject to the 24/7 Reference Privacy Statement.

Database Search Records

12. Searches of the OCLN library catalog are conducted via OCLN's online public access catalog. In accordance with OCLN policy, users are not personally identified and there is no permanent record of searches performed by individual users. Catalog searches conducted from computers in the Library are retained in the Library PC's browser history for one day.

13. The Library provides in-library access to a number of commercial online databases. Users are not personally identified and the Library maintains no permanent record of databases accessed and searches performed by individual users. When accessing databases from a Library computer, searches are retained in the Library PC's browser history for one day.

14. When accessing databases from home or office, users must provide their library card number to login. Once a user is determined to be a registered borrower, the user is forwarded to the commercial database vendor server. In accordance with Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) policy, users' library card numbers are not passed on to the commercial database vendors and no personally identifiable information is retained. The MBLC does not record either the particular database used or the subject of a search and does not obtain or retain

any information about users that may be a part of the user's library record on their home library system.

Computer & Internet Use Records

15. Users access public use computers in the Main Library by registering for a Computer Use Card, which identifies them by name and address and/or library card number. When a user logs into a Library computer with a Computer Use Card, the Library's computer network management software tracks which user is accessing which computer. This log is retained for two months (60 days).

16. The Library maintains no permanent record of what users view or the documents users create. However, the Library's Internet service providers may maintain such records. The history file of Web sites visited by users is deleted from Library computers at the end of each day. Users are encouraged to clear their browsing, location bar, and session history in the Web browser at the end of each session. Users should never save files on Library computers.

17. Computer users are asked to respect the privacy of other computer users in the Library. This includes not using someone else's Computer Use Card, not trying to gain access to someone else's data, e-mail or search history, and not retrieving someone else's printout.

18. The Library is not responsible for users' privacy when they disclose information to outside Web sites accessed via Library computers. It is the user's responsibility to protect their personal information. Users should not allow automatic logins to Web-based e-mail, should never save passwords on Library computers, and should close the Web browser when finished with a session.

19. The Library cannot guarantee the security and privacy of any Internet transaction, particularly e-commerce transactions.

Web Site Records

20. When users visit the Library Web site (thomascranelibrary.org), the Library's Web host collects and stores only the following information, using standard Web server log files:
    - The IP address of your computer or of your Internet provider
    - The Web site that referred you to our site
    - The date and time you access our site
    - The pages you visit

    This information is collected in order to improve the content offered on our Web site and to compile statistical reports. The log files do not include names, phone numbers, addresses, e-mail addresses or any other personally identifiable information. The Library makes no attempt to match personally identifiable information with a user's IP address, or to track users as they browse through the Web site. However, the Library's Web hosting services may do so.

21. We ask users for personal information such as name, e-mail address, library barcode, address and/or telephone number only when needed to assist in answering questions, providing information and other library services, or for library program registration or contests.

22. Persistent cookies, or lines of information that are stored on users' computers, are not used. No information is being cached in users' cookie files, nor is the Web site's server retrieving cookies from users' computers.

23. The Library's Web site contains links to other Web sites. The Library is not responsible for the privacy practices of other sites, which may be different from the privacy practices described in this policy.   It is the user's responsibility to become familiar with privacy practices of other sites visited and to protect personal information when using non-Library Web sites.

E-Mails and Web Forms
24. Personally identifiable information provided to the Library by users via e-mails or Web forms will be used only for such purposes as are described at the point of collection (for example, on a Web form), such as to send information or to provide library services, update a user's registration record, or to respond to user questions or comments. E-mail records containing personally identifiable information are deleted as soon as the requested information is supplied or the transaction is completed.

Children's Privacy
25. Protecting the privacy of children is especially important to the Library. We urge parents to supervise their children's use of the Internet and to instruct children never to give out personal information (name, address, telephone number, password) online.

26. We will only display a child's first name, last initial, and age on our Web site or in the library when announcing Library program participants or contest winners, or when displaying user-submitted comments. We will never display a child's photo on the Library Web site or in the library without permission from a parent or legal guardian.

Security
27. The Library has put in place appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information we collect and prevent unauthorized access, to maintain data security, and to ensure the correct use of information. We cannot, however, guarantee that information we collect would never be accessed by unauthorized users.

28. This Privacy Policy does not apply to e-mail and other electronic communications that users send and receive outside of the Library via the Internet. On the Internet, there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.

29. For network security purposes and to ensure that online services remain available to all users, the Library and/or its Internet service providers may use software programs to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information or otherwise cause damage.

30. The Library makes no attempt to identify individual users or their usage habits, except to prevent unauthorized attempts to upload or change information or to disrupt network operations.

Revisions and Contact Information

31. The Library reserves the right to modify this Privacy Policy at any time, with the approval of the Library Board of Trustees. Notice of changes will be posted to the Library Web site as soon as the changes are in effect.

32. Questions or concerns about this Privacy Policy should be addressed to the Library Director.

Adopted by Vote of the Library Board of Trustees, January 9, 2006