

Digital Library Card Privacy Policy Detail

Privacy Policy Statement

Harris County Public Library is committed to protecting the privacy of our staff, donors, customers, and other contacts. The Library will collect no personal information about you when you visit our website or register for a program or a library card unless you choose to provide that information to us. Any information you choose to provide will only be used to provide or improve library services.

This confidentiality extends to information sought or received, and materials consulted, borrowed, acquired and includes database search records, circulation records, interlibrary loan records, and other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities or services.

The Library secures library account information by placing it on the secure portion of the Library's website. That is why customers have to enter a unique Username and PIN each time they want to access their account information.

E-mails and Web Forms

Personally identifying information that you provide by 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 provide library services to you, update your membership record, or to respond to your questions or comments.

If you provide contact information, the Library may contact you to clarify your comment or question, or to learn about your level of customer satisfaction with library services.

Any credit card information you provide for fines and fees or services is secure and used only for that intended purpose.

Information Collected and Stored Automatically

During your visit as you browse through the web site, read pages, or download information, certain information will be automatically gathered and stored about your visit but not about you. This information does not identify you personally. The Library automatically collects and stores only the following information about the visit:

- The Internet domain (for example, "xcompany.com" if a private Internet access account, or "aschool.edu" if connected from a university) and IP address (an IP address is a number that is automatically assigned to a computer whenever it is surfing the Web) from which access to our web site is gained;
- The type of browser and operating system used to access the Library's site;
- The date and time of access to the Library's site;
- The pages visited and for how long; and
- The address of the website from which the initial visit to www.hcpl.net is launched.

The Library uses this information to help the Library make our site more useful to visitors and to learn about the number of visitors to our site and the types of technology our visitors use. The data that is collected is not connected to your personal information or identity.

Links to Other Sites

The Library's Website contains links to other sites. Harris County Public Library is not responsible for the privacy practices of other sites, which may be different from the privacy practices described in this policy. We encourage you to become familiar with privacy practices of other sites you visit, including linked sites.

Customer Circulation Records

The Library maintains information provided by our customers from the registration form they complete when they register for a library card. When an item is checked out, that item is then

linked to that customer's record in the library's system. At the moment that library material is returned to the library the link between the customer and the material is broken – the Library's system does not retain information on what materials were taken out by whom the moment the item is returned.

The Library's computer system has a logger file for technical purposes that logs every transaction in the system to ensure that if there is a data corruption or a system problem, the Library can rebuild the data from the logger file. All of that data is purged through the Library's data processing back up process on a 60-day cycle.

Security

For site security purposes and to ensure that this service remains available to all users, Harris County Public Library uses software programs to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information or otherwise cause damage.

Unauthorized attempts to upload information or change information on this service are strictly prohibited and may be punishable under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986 and 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1001 and 1030. Except for the above purposes, no other attempts are made to identify individual users or their usage habits.

Harris County Public Library recognizes that law enforcement agencies and officers may occasionally believe that library records contain information which may be helpful to the investigation of criminal activity. If there is a reasonable basis to believe such records are necessary to the progress of an investigation or prosecution, the American judicial system provides the mechanism for seeking release of such confidential records. Library records will not be made available to any agency of state, federal or local government except pursuant to such process, order or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power.

Revisions

The Library reserves the right to change or modify this privacy statement at any time. If the Library revises this privacy statement, changes will be posted on the Library's homepage.

Adapted from the American Library Association's Privacy Statement

Privacy & Confidentiality of Library Records

The Texas Public Information Act provides that all information collected, assembled, or maintained by or for governmental bodies, (except in those situations where the governmental body does not have either a right of access to or ownership of the information, pursuant to the law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business) is public information and available to the public during normal business hours of any governmental body.

The Texas Public Information Act, however, provides a list of exempted records, one of these being records of a library or library system, supported in whole or in part by public funds that identify or serve to identify a person who requests, obtains, or uses a library material or service.