



Appendix E: Checklist for Wireless Access Policy

Use this “Quick Look” checklist to make sure you’re covering your bases when it comes to crafting a wireless policy for your library.

First, look at your existing Internet (Computer) Use Policy. Do you need to add anything to it relating to use of the wireless? You may decide that it covers your situation. However, do keep in mind the following possible additions:

- **Network Security:** If you’re providing a fairly open network, consider a disclaimer about the possibility of radio signals (wireless) being intercepted. This is more specific to wireless than the equally useful disclaimers in your Internet policy about how the “library is not responsible for lost data due to network failure” and “beware of viruses” and “be careful about transmitting your personal information on an open network.”
- **Network Availability:** WLANs can be flaky, and patron laptops can be even more so. Note that they may lose signal at random and the library takes no responsibility for lost data, etc.
- **Limitations on Use:** Time limits, bandwidth limits, no FTP, no telnet, no streaming content. Do you offer printing? Web-based email only (no SMTP server)?
- **Personal Equipment Security:** Warn patrons that the library is not responsible for **stolen** equipment, lost data due to their equipment failure, etc.
- **Filtering:** Note if the wireless access is filtered, especially if the in-house is not, or is only partially filtered (filter by patron choice only, for instance). You may want to quote any law (CIPA) relating to this in brief.
- **Support:** Will your library staff provide help with patron laptops? Can they provide help with determining if there is a signal present (i.e., if the APs are working)? If you don’t want staff touching patron laptops due to liability, say so.

Getting it done:

- **Staff:** Make sure your staff are kept in the loop about any wireless initiatives, in particular about what they’ll be expected to offer in the way of support for patrons. This sounds silly, but wireless initiatives can happen so quickly that staff may not have time to become aware of all the issues involved, especially what patrons will ask them.
- **Promotion:** How will you notify users of the policy? Do they have to sign off on it before they can use your system? Will you print it out and post it? Put it on your Web site? Use a captive portal or similar product to force users to agree to the policy?
- **Policy Approval:** Any policy should be run by your board or advising committee, and preferably your university or city attorney, to be sure the language is appropriate both for liability and also in line with your existing policies.

*Adapted with permission from: **Wireless Networking: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians** by Louise Alcorn and Maryellen Mott Allen. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2006.*