

Subject: Privacy

Application: Employees, customers, consultants, contractors, vendors and visitors

The Westchester Library System (WLS) and its member libraries are committed to protecting the privacy of our staff, donors, customers and other external contacts. The WLS privacy policy defines our commitment not to collect any personal information about our users when you visit our websites or register for a program or a library card unless you choose to provide such information. Any information you choose to provide will only be used to more effectively provide and better target library services throughout the County.

This confidentiality extends to information sought or received, 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.

WLS places account information on the secure portion of its computer system. For this reason, patrons are asked to input their barcode number and PIN each time they want to access their account information on the website.

Cookies

Users accessing the WLS or member library websites will need to enable cookies¹ in order to access a number of resources available through WLS. WLS's servers use cookies solely to verify that a person is an authorized user in order to allow access to licensed library resources and to customize Web pages to that user's specification. Cookies sent by WLS servers will disappear soon after the user's computer browser is closed.

Emails and Web Forms

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 better target library services to meet constituent demands.

WLS or a member library may contact a patron to clarify a comment or question, or to learn about your level of customer satisfaction with library services. To do so requires contact information provided by the patron. WLS will not use patron/customer emails for commercial purposes nor will it provide such information to external organizations.

¹ A cookie is very small text file placed on your hard drive by a Web Page server. It is essentially your identification card, and cannot be executed as code or deliver viruses. It is uniquely associated with the computer on which it is placed.

Information Collected and Stored Automatically

WLS does not collect information which identifies you personally. However, when a patron visits a WLS website to browse through the web site, read pages, or download information, certain information will be automatically gathered and stored about the visit to these pages:

1. 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 connected to the Internet) from which access to the WLS web site is gained;
2. The type of browser and operating system used to access the WLS website;
3. The date and time of access to the website;
4. The pages visited and for how long; and
5. The address of the website from which the initial visit to www.westchesterlibraries.org was launched, if any.

WLS uses this information to help make its site more useful to visitors and to learn about the number of visitors to the site and the types of technology used. The data that is collected is not connected to a patron's personal information or identity.

Links to Other Sites

WLS's Website contains links to other sites. WLS and our member libraries are not responsible for the privacy practices of other sites, which may be different from the privacy practices described in this policy. It is the patron's responsibility to become familiar with privacy practices of websites external to WLS, including linked sites.

Customer Circulation Records

WLS member libraries do not use a paper process to collect and track customer circulation records. It is done electronically. Each 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 tied to that customer's record in the WLS system. At the moment that library material is returned to the library, the link between the customer and the material is broken – the WLS system does not retain information on what materials were taken out by whom, the moment the item is returned assuming there are no existing fines or lost/overdue items on record.

Privacy & Confidentiality of Library Records

Library records that are deemed confidential are covered by New York State Law signed on June 13, 1988 (I CPLR 4509). These records are related to the circulation of library materials that contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of public, free association, school, college and university libraries and library systems, of this state, including but not limited to records related to the circulation of library materials, computer database searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference queries, requests, or the use of audio-visual materials, films or records. These records shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except that such records may be disclosed upon the request or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order or where otherwise required by statute.

Revisions

WLS and our member libraries reserve the right to change or modify this privacy statement at any time. If WLS revises this privacy statement, changes will be posted on the WLS homepage.

This policy was approved by the WLS Board of Trustees at their 1/25/2011 Meeting and is to be reviewed annually.