

Johnson City Public Library Privacy Policy

Johnson City Public Library makes every effort to protect the privacy of library users. The library is guided by Tennessee State law regarding the privacy of patrons of the library, specifically Title 10, Chapter 8 of the Tennessee Code Annotated; Confidentiality of Library Records. The code reads as follows:

No employee of a library shall disclose any library record that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific materials, information, or services or as having otherwise used such a library.

Johnson City Public Library also adheres to the American Library Association Code of Ethics that states in Article III:

We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

This policy establishes guidelines for the protection of personally identifiable information contained in library records or accessible in the library or through its computer systems.

Confidentiality of Library Records

Johnson City Public Library staff will not respond to any informal request by a third party for personally identifiable information about any library user. Such information includes database search records, reference interviews, email requests for information, circulation records, interlibrary loan records, and other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities, or services.

Personally identifiable information may be released only to a law enforcement agency after presentation of an order by a court of competent jurisdiction issued in proper form (a court issued subpoena or search warrant) and/or under the provisions of the USA Patriot Act.

The USA PATRIOT Act

The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (USA PATRIOT Act) became law on Oct. 26, 2001. Under provisions of the act, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and law enforcement officials may seek court orders for Library records for investigations relevant to national security or terrorism. Libraries or librarians served with these search warrants may not disclose, under penalty of law, the existence of the warrants or the fact that records were produced as a result of the warrants.

Personally Identifiable Information

- Circulation Records: Johnson City Public Library will collect only the information needed to contact library users, such as mailing address, email address, phone number, etc., in order to ensure the proper notification, lending, and return of library materials and the collection of fines. Records will be retained for the shortest length of time necessary to facilitate library operations. Patron material is circulated via the NEW Libraries Catalog *Innovative Interfaces Millennium* automation system. The circulation software tracks materials currently checked out, automatically erasing a reader's borrowing record once a book is returned. Information on the last person to have borrowed an item is retained in the Item record until another patron checks out the item.
- Individuals may submit their name, email address, postal address, telephone number or other identifying information in order to receive library services such as borrowing privileges, access to Internet stations, receiving personal responses to questions, receiving Library promotional materials, or being added to specific mailing lists. The Library does not sell, rent or otherwise distribute information to outside parties except for possible uses related to the recovery of materials.
- Email reference questions submitted to the Library will be retained for no more than three months. Questions are retained only for the purpose of statistics and to assist with follow up queries from clients. The questions themselves and any personal information such as names, email addresses, telephone and fax numbers submitted with the questions are confidential and are treated as other library user information under provisions the Confidentiality of Library Records policy above.
- Searches of the online public access catalog (OPAC): The Library does not require personal information to use the OPAC. OPAC searches are conducted via the NEW Libraries Catalog *Innovative Interfaces Millennium* automation software. Once a search is completed, a patron may clear their own search history. The search history is also erased automatically whenever the web browser is closed. The software does not retain a copy of any search.
- Electronic Databases and the Internet: When patrons use their library card to reserve a computer, a reservation slip is printed for the patron but no paper record with the patron's information is generated elsewhere. When the patron logs off of a library computer, the software erases all history of their research and activity. In locations where a paper reservation list is generated by library staff, all paper records are discarded at the end of each business day. Library patrons should be aware that the Johnson City Public Library and other Tennessee library organizations license commercial databases from a variety of vendors. The library will make every effort to restrict electronic database vendors from collecting and using identifying personal information of library users, however it provides no guarantee that personal information will not be shared with third parties.
- Interlibrary Loan Records: Patrons may borrow items not owned by the Johnson City Public Library from other libraries within Tennessee and nationally. The Johnson City

Public Library tracks items currently being borrowed through a database and generates a paper record with patron information. Once the materials are returned and all appropriate fines and/or fees are paid, the paper record is destroyed. The database activity will be held for no longer than one year.

- **Reference Interviews:** A reference interview occurs when a patron looking for information approaches a library staff member, who interviews the patron in order to narrow down the specific information needed. Reference librarians do not discuss patron inquiries with others except when consulting another librarian on a complex question. No paper record is kept during the interview that has any patron information on it. If a patron name and telephone number is taken by phone, the information is destroyed as soon as the information requested by the patron is delivered.
- **Security Cameras:** Security cameras are installed throughout the library to assist staff and security personnel in monitoring and quickly responding to situations affecting the health and safety of library visitors and staff. Video from security cameras are kept on file for seven days, unless an incident occurs that requires holding the file longer. Security camera video files are only made available to law enforcement through a legal subpoena or warrant.

Approved by Johnson City Public Library Board of Directors – April 14, 2009