

# Privacy Policy

By **Patty**

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## Policy Description/Details:

### Introduction

Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. Confidentiality exists when a library is in possession of personally identifiable information about users and keeps that information private on their behalf. The Minuteman Library Network (MLN) and our member libraries recognize the importance of protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our users' registration, circulation, and electronic access information. Our commitment to privacy and confidentiality has deep roots not only in law, but also in the ethics and practices of librarianship.

User right's - as well as our institution's responsibilities - outlined here are based in part on what are known in the United States as the five "Fair Information Practice Principles." These five principles outline the rights of Notice, Choice, Access, Security, and Enforcement.

### Personal Information We May Possess

We must obtain certain personal information about you in order to provide a library account. If you are affiliated with our college libraries, we may receive personally identifiable information to create and update your library account from your college. This information about library users is found in the following contexts.

**User registration information:** This is the information, including names, home addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses, that is provided to the library when a library card is obtained by a user. This information is retained for library business, and user accountability for checked out materials. It is also retained to determine eligibility for resources limited to residents of a community.

**Circulation information:** When library materials are borrowed through our system, records indicating the dates, materials, and borrowers are captured in our database. While we compile and retain data on how often each item is borrowed, the link to the borrower is broken at the time the material is returned **unless** overdue fines have accrued. Once the fines have been paid and processed, borrower data is no longer saved. The only exception is the ability for users to maintain a [Reading History](#) for their own use.

**Electronic Access Information:** We may obtain data regarding users at the time they use a library card to gain access to an electronic database of use computers within the library. MLN keeps no permanent record of

sites visited by library users, the electronic databases accessed, or the searches performed by individual users. While we may disclose information about use of our web site in aggregate (such as server use statistics) we will not disclose to third parties any information that could be used to identify individuals or their use of MLN resources, except as required by law or appropriate law enforcement procedures.

### **Access to Information We Have About You**

Any person is entitled to view his or her own library account information in person with positive identification in our libraries. Only users with proper identification may correct their library account information through the library. The records of minors with their own cards are also considered to be private to those persons.

### **Minuteman Library Network General Policy of Nondisclosure**

MLN will not publicly disclose personal information about library users or their borrowing history under any circumstances. MLN will not sell, lease, or give users' personal information or borrowing information to companies, governmental agencies, or individuals except as needed by the participating libraries or as required by federal and state law. We provide essential information to trusted partners who work on behalf of or with Minuteman; however, these companies do not have any independent right to share this information. These companies must demonstrate that they agree to execute a document in the format provided by Minuteman specifically citing that user data will not be retained or sold or otherwise distributed or disclosed.

Personal information of library users may be accessed by and used by a staff member of MLN or of a member library when the staff member is acting within the scope of his or her duties in the administration of the library. While all member libraries are encouraged to develop and implement their own privacy policy, MLN assumes no liability for disclosure of library user personal information by any library staff acting within or outside the scope of his or her duties.

MLN or a member library may be required to provide a user's personal information to a local, state, or federal governmental entity pursuant to compulsory legal process. While we will make every effort to respect the privacy of our users, if under a legal requirement to turn over data, such as a court order, subpoena, or search warrant, we will comply with the law.

### **Data Integrity and Security**

Minuteman Library Network makes every reasonable effort to maintain the accuracy of all information we collect and retain. We are also committed to maintaining the security of all personal information. Appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures are in place in an effort to safeguard and secure the information we collect to prevent unauthorized access, alteration, or disclosure of data.

Despite the precautions we take to prevent unauthorized access to personal information, we recognize that no system is immune from unlawful intrusion through hacking, which violates both federal and state laws;

therefore, the Minuteman Library Network cannot guarantee that information we collect can never be accessed by unauthorized users.

## **Categories of Data**

### **User Data**

Data about library users is stored in our library automation software, which is not accessible from outside of the library. Library staff must use a username and password for access to the system. Only that data needed to provide accountability for library materials or contact information for notification is stored. Data is removed from the system if a user is inactive for 4 or more years.

### **Transaction Data**

#### **Borrowing**

Information on a user's borrowing activity is stored only until borrowed material has been returned and any associated fines or bills for material have been paid and processed.

#### **Holds**

User requests are kept by the system until they are filled, and for an additional 30 days if the item is not picked up or the request is cancelled.

Backup tapes for system restoration in case of catastrophic data loss are recycled on a regular basis.

## **Searching and User Account Inquiries**

No personally identifiable data is kept about user searches in the catalogue.

If a user chooses to record "Preferred Searches", the information is only accessible by the user, using the user's library barcode and PIN.

If a user chooses to keep a "[Reading History](#)", the data is only accessible by using the user's barcode and PIN.

If a user chooses to keep reading lists, the data is only accessible by the user using his barcode and PIN.

The Minuteman site provides secure SSL transmission of any dialogs conducted once a user has logged in with barcode and PIN.

## **Credit Card Transactions**

MLN accepts credit card payments for fines and fees levied by member libraries. Payments may be made either online or at a self-checkout station at a member library. Minuteman uses a secure, reliable payment connection through a third party vendor.

No credit card information is stored by MLN. The credit card statement will list "Minuteman" as the vendor.

Minuteman is not able to provide refunds on your credit card. All Minuteman libraries have their own policies regarding refunds for lost items. Some libraries do not provide refunds for lost and paid material. [Contact your local library for more information.](#)

### **Electronic Database Access**

Access to electronic databases (for which the state, the Minuteman Library Network, or the individual library pays a subscription fee) from outside of a library often requires authentication that the user is eligible for access. The user is asked to enter the library card number. The Minuteman Library Network only provides the outside database provider with an indication of whether or not the user is eligible for access to this database. No personal information is exchanged with the outside vendor.

The Minuteman Library Network does not store any record of the searches made by users in electronic databases such as the subscription magazine and newspaper databases, the general reference databases, etc.

### **Website Access**

No personally identifiable information is tracked for visitors to the Minuteman Library Network websites: <http://www.mln.lib.ma.us/> and <http://library.minlib.net/>

### **Email**

Libraries collect email addresses for purposes directly related to library services. Electronic mail is sent to notify users when requested material is ready for pickup at the library, or when material has become overdue or billed. These email addresses are kept confidential and never shared outside of the library network.

There is no guarantee of privacy for email that travels over the Internet between a user and the Minuteman Library Network. Users can remove their email address online <https://library.minlib.net/patroninfo/> or request that it be removed from their record by a library staff member.

### **Internet Usage**

## **Links to Other Sites**

The Minuteman Library Network site contains links to many other sites. Minuteman Library Network is not responsible for the confidentiality of any information patrons provide to outside sites.

When users connect to web sites outside of the Minuteman servers, all communication is over the public Internet. Users must understand that this is not protected communication when choosing to provide personal information to external web sites. Minuteman cannot and does not guarantee that every task completed on PCs connected to its network is private.

## **Computer Use Records**

Minuteman Library Network member libraries offer computers for public access. Some MLN member libraries use software to manage the high demand for these computers. Users enter their library card registration number (or barcode) to use a computer. While statistics about overall usage patterns are maintained in order to improve services offered, the activities of specific users are not retained. User login information is removed from the computer in accordance with the policy of the individual member library.

Library users must keep in mind that public workstations are neither private nor secure and must use judgment and discretion when using a library computer. The Minuteman Library Network assumes no liability for any violation of privacy of individual or any commercial or financial loss to users who use library computers.

## **Forms**

The Minuteman Library Network web site provides forms for contacting the Network. Data so provided is kept confidential and is used only to respond in cases where the user has asked for a response. We reserve the right to keep suggestions for future improvement to our system or our web site, so long as we strip the suggestion of any personally identifiable data.

## **References:**

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 78: Section 7 - <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/78-7.htm>

ALA Code of Ethics - <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics.cfm>

ALA Privacy and Confidentiality - <http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=ifissues&Template-/ContentManagementj/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=25304>

MLIN Massachusetts Library and Information Network - <http://mbic.state.ma.us/utilities/privacy.php>

Fair Information Practice Principles - <http://www.ftc.gov/reports/privacy3/fairinfo.htm>

## **Motion By:**

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**Seconded By:**

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**Date Approved:**

**06/16/2010**

[Administration](#)

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