Daily Time Limit on Public Internet Terminals and Access to Chat Rooms/Instant Messaging

Hank Long, Director, Englewood Public Library, posted the following inquiry to Libnet on May 17, 2005:

> How many libraries have a daily maximum time limit for use of public Internet terminals and how is that working? If you have a daily maximum limit, what is it? If you don't have a daily maximum limit, has it presented any problems for you?

In addition, Charlene Swansen, Mancos Public Library, posted the following related inquiry to Libnet on May 18, 2005, as follows:

> Do any public libraries on this list allow patrons to access chat rooms or perform instant messaging while using Public Library patron computers?

Daily Time Limit on Public Internet Computers-Comments	Respondent
Garfield County has a daily maximum limit of one hour per day. We only have 2 public Internet terminals per branch and we reserve up to 3 days ahead of time. We also permit 15 min. email checks, one per day. For the most part, it works well but we have had a few patrons who consistently go over and yell about the limit. The Glenwood Springs Library served just under 1,400 Internet patrons from Jan.-Apr. on their two terminals so we can't afford to let anyone monopolize what we have. Space for added public Internet terminals isn't feasible.	Jacilyn Spuhler Garfield County
Our maximum is 2 hours per day. We have some computers that are first come, first serve for 30 minutes at a time. People can use them for a total of two hours in one long session if no one else is waiting. This is very rare. Our computers that provide the Office Suite and Internet access are available for 1 hour at a time for up to two hours. The user can use any combination of computers for the two hour maximum including time used in another branch. In other words people may not travel from one branch to another in order to get more than two hours total in one day. Some people fuss about the time limit but most accept it. There are very few times during the day that they are not all in use.	Terry Pickens
Our daily time limit is 2 hours and only 1 hour if others are waiting.	Valerie, Delta

Another district I worked for had a 1 hour limit that could be extended in 15 minute increments if no one else was waiting.	Public Library
At the Louisville Public Library we have posted a one hour per day time limit. Our basic system is just an on-your-honor, first come, first served system which so far has worked well for us. We allow our patrons to stay on as long as they like unless others are waiting. We've rarely had to enforce the one hour per day time limit, but it is a back-up for the occasional patron who comes in at a busy time and says he's just gotten on a computer and we know he was in earlier in the day.	Kathy Kelly, Louisville Public Library
Our maximum time is 30 minutes but if we don't have anyone waiting we are lenient. We only have three patron access computers so without time limits we can get really jammed up. People are really good about shutting down when we tell them their time is up.	Sharon Johnson, Director, Kiowa County Public Library District
Aurora Public Library allows four 30-minute sessions per day. If there is no one waiting to use the computer, customers are given time extensions of 15 minute increments. We use a PC-Reservation system that has really improved customer relations.	Aurora Central Library
At the Philip S. Miller Library in Castle Rock, we allow patrons 2 hours per day and will only give them more time if 1) there are a number of computers free (say 5 (we have 18)) so we know we won't be taking time away from other patrons who haven't had any computer usage that day or 2) they desperately need more time (e.g. doing an online test that can't be saved).	Justine Shaffner, Head of Adult Services, Philip S. Miller Library Douglas County Libraries
Chat Rooms / Instant Messaging-Comments	
Yes, we do.	Woodruff Memorial Library
One district I worked for allowed it, my current district does not.	Valerie, Delta Library
Chat rooms yes, instant messaging no at Broomfield (Mamie Doud Eisenhower Public Library).	Roberta Depp
We allow full access to the internet to anybody, including games, chat rooms, instant messaging, etc.	Bobbie Chapman, Southern Peaks Public Library
Douglas County Libraries allows access to chat and IM, but patrons would need to download a free IM program to use IM each time they logged on to one of our computers since we don't have IM programs installed and our computers wipe out any programs not installed by our IT staff each time someone logs off.	Justine Shaffner, Head of Adult Services, Philip S. Miller Library

Let me add my 2 cents worth to this discussion in particular regarding any Gates computers. It is possible to add the IM programs so that they will work on Gates computers but you want to do it in a particular way so that the programs will not remember any patron information (i.e, usernames and passwords). Basically, you need to install the programs you want logged on as Exec, open each program, set the preferences not to remember usernames, passwords, etc. Then you have to take security of the profiles, logoff exec, logon to the profiles, setup Desktop icons for the IM programs, logoff profiles, logon to exec, re install security programs. If that short version of the instructions is not enough to dissuade you, and you still want to install them, please feel free to contact me off list and I will offer whatever assistance I can. I did help a library install AOL IM, Yahoo, and MSN messenger on their 4 Gates computers. Be warned, it took almost an hour per machine.	Ross Callender, Former Gates Trainer now in Durango
La Veta allows both - no problems or complaints from other patrons.	La Veta Regional Library District
Yes'm. We do.	Jeffrey Donlan, Salida Regional Library