

LCI Patron Privacy Statement

Library Connection and its member libraries believe that free inquiry is an essential aspect of library service. We believe that upholding the right to privacy prevents the right to free and open inquiry from being compromised by having the subject of one's interest examined by others.

Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. Our commitment to patron privacy and confidentiality has deep roots not only in law, but also in the ethics and practices of librarianship. In accordance with the American Library Association's Code of Ethics:

"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."

Connecticut General Statutes

Section 11-25 of the Connecticut General Statutes declares all patron identification and patron transaction information confidential and requires libraries not to release any of this information without the patron's permission or a court order. This law specifically exempts patron identification and transaction information from Freedom of Information requests. Library Connection will not share patron identification or transaction data with third parties unless compelled to do so by a court order or as needed to third-party vendors providing services to Library Connection or its member libraries.

Patron Personal Information

All patron information records are the property of the library associated with the patron's residency or institutional affiliation, the library selected as the patron's default hold pickup location, and any library with which the patron has any current transactional data. Information collected varies slightly by library, but most patron accounts include the patron's name, library card number, address, town of residence, and phone number. Each library is responsible for their own privacy policy and/or practices. If a patron is concerned about the information their library is retaining and how it may be used, they should reach out to their library directly. Patron accounts are periodically purged to remove accounts that have been expired for over two years when no checkouts, holds, fines, or fees are attached to those accounts.

As soon as a library item is returned, the link to that item is deleted from a patron's account unless that patron owes overdue fines for the item. Retained in all items' records are the patron

record number of the last person who took it out, and the name of the current borrower of the item. In addition, if a patron owes a late fee or replacement fee, that information stays on their record. Additionally, logs of transactions executed during the operation of the system and copies of notices sent by the system are maintained for 12 weeks. Library Connection staff (not member library staff) can search these logs at the request of the member libraries.

If a patron elects to use the reading history option, the system will remember all items they checked out to that patron even after the items are returned. This information is protected under the privacy laws and can only be accessed by the patron or by the library if presented with a court order. The patron can at any time delete items from their reading history and those items will no longer be included. The patron can also opt-out of the reading history at which point their entire saved reading history will be deleted. For people who do not choose to opt-in to the reading history, no history of checked out items is kept beyond that described previously in this document.

Third Party Security

To the best of our abilities, we ensure that our contracts, licenses, and off-site computer service arrangements reflect our policies and legal obligations concerning patron privacy and confidentiality. In circumstances in which there is a risk that personally identifiable information may be disclosed, we will present it to the board for discussion and approval in advance of implementation. Libraries are encouraged to contact LCI staff for guidance prior to signing contracts with vendors whose products and/or services may present a risk to patrons' personally identifiable information.