General Statement of Policy

The Northwest Regional Library System (NWRLS) provides 3D printers for public use in several library locations. 3D printers are made available to the public in order to provide access to new and emerging technologies, inspire an interest in design and engineering, and provide opportunities for members of the community to bring their creations to life.

A 3D printer builds a three dimensional object by depositing successive layers of melted plastic. 3D objects are designed using special software, and are saved as .stl or other file types that are recognized by the 3D printer. There are also online repositories of 3D designs which allow users to download and print designs created by others.

This policy describes the manner in which 3D printers may be used in the library.

Regulations for 3D Printer Use

a) Customers may use 3D printers in two ways:
1) Customers may reserve a session during designated 3D printing open hours. Availability will vary by library location. Limits on the length of sessions and the number of sessions may be imposed in order to provide fair and equal access.
2) Customers may submit an .stl file to a library with a 3D printer to be printed by library staff. Print jobs will be added to the queue and printed in the order received. The Library cannot guarantee model quality or specific delivery times.

b) Only trained library staff or approved volunteers will have hands-on access to library 3D printers.

c) Printing is only permitted when trained staff or authorized volunteers are present. After-hours printing is not allowed.

d) Library 3D printers may be used only for lawful purposes. 3D printers may not be used to print objects which are:
1) Prohibited by local, state or federal law;
2) Unsafe, harmful, dangerous, or otherwise inappropriate for the library environment;
3) Under copyright, patent, or trademark protection;
4) In violation of Library or County policies.

e) Only filament provided by the library will be used in library 3D printers.

f) Library staff or approved volunteers will review files before printing to determine whether the request meets policy requirements, and to determine the cost of the print.

g) Customers are responsible for paying the cost of each print. The cost of each print job is determined by the amount of filament used, which is calculated by the printing software.

h) Library staff reserves the right to refuse print requests and to put limitations on 3D printer usage.

i) If an object is printed with rafts and/or supports, the customer is responsible for removing them.

A list of libraries offering 3D printing and details about the process are available on the library website, www.nwrls.com.

Adopted, Bay County Board of County Commissioners, August 15, 2017