

Western Washington University Libraries Privacy Statement

One of the cornerstones of librarianship is respect for the privacy of library users. Western Washington University Libraries recognizes the importance of protecting the privacy of those who use the Libraries resources and services, and adheres to patron privacy and confidentiality guidelines as developed and endorsed by the American Library Association. For more information, the complete Western Washington University Libraries privacy policy can be found at:

[https://library.wvu.edu/files/Western Libraries Patron Privacy Statement.pdf](https://library.wvu.edu/files/Western_Libraries_Patron_Privacy_Statement.pdf)

Privacy Commitment

Western Washington University Libraries commitment to you:

One of the cornerstones of librarianship is respect for the privacy of library users. Western Washington University Libraries recognizes the importance of protecting your privacy and the confidentiality of the information you share with us when you use our websites or other library services. On this page you will find the Western Washington University Libraries policy on collecting, disclosing, maintaining, protecting and using your personal information.

FAQ

What is your basis for protecting my information as a library user?

Western Washington University Libraries is dedicated to protecting your identity as a library user. We will not disclose your personally-identifiable information to any entity outside the Libraries, except as required by law or by authorized law enforcement procedures.

As a baseline, Washington State law supports our protection of your identity as a library user. [RCW 42.56.310](#) states:

Any library record, the primary purpose of which is to maintain control of library materials, or to gain access to information, that discloses or could be used to disclose the identity of a library user is exempt from disclosure.

Other laws also protect information you share with us. For example, personal information that might constitute part of your educational record or that would identify you as a student is protected by both state and federal laws, and financial information you supply to pay fines or fees is protected by state law.

To support our goal of protecting your privacy, we will handle your information securely, we will retain it only as long as needed for business or legal requirements, and we will dispose of it as soon as it is no longer necessary to

support our services to you or after we have satisfied legal requirements. For more information about retention and disposition requirements, contact libraryadministration@wwu.edu.

What information do you collect through your website or online services?

Western Washington University Libraries collects a variety of information on its website and other online services. Most of the information generated is typical of online interactions. In some cases, the data could be used to construct a profile of a user, possibly even the user's identity; in other cases, our interaction with users necessarily involves documenting user identity. Here is what we collect and how we use it:

Website

What we collect: The web server collects technical information from your web browser, including:

- Browser type
- Internet address
- Operating system type
- Web address of the page from which you linked to the Western Washington University Libraries site
- Information related to tracking web browsers through the use of cookies.

How we use it:

- To improve the usability of the Western Washington University Libraries website;
- For technical troubleshooting;
- For tracking aggregate statistical trends regarding use of the Western Washington University Libraries web-based resources.
- For our use of Google Analytics, which uses cookies, to compile statistical analysis related to user browsing behavior on the Libraries' websites (to assess and improve user experience).

- The web server may also use browser cookies or other technologies to maintain session and preference information.

Email, chat, web form or voicemail communication

What we collect: Depending on the method of communication, information we collect may include your email address, the IP address from the computer where you sent the communication, your phone number, the content of your message and attachments, and/or your name, if given.

How we use it: This information is necessary for us to have reciprocal communication with you. We will only use this information in support of the purpose for which you submitted it.

Surveys/user feedback

What we collect: Western Washington University Libraries collects information from our users who voluntarily participate in interviews or surveys we conduct as we assess the quality of our operations. We strive to collect this information as anonymous input, but occasionally we may receive feedback via email or web services that can include email addresses or web-related data such as IP addresses.

How we use it: Used for assessment and improvement of Western Washington University Libraries facilities, materials, or services. This information is anonymized and aggregated to the extent possible and is retained solely for the purposes of compiling internal assessments.

What about third-party tools I access via the Libraries—is my personal information secure with those vendors?

The Western Washington University Libraries website contains links to websites and licensed databases that Western Washington University Libraries does not maintain or support. The Libraries also use third-party tools for some library services (such as online chatting with a librarian and searching for materials via specialized widgets).

- Please note that Western Washington University Libraries is not responsible for the privacy practices or the content of these third parties.
- We encourage you to read the policies associated with these third-party tools before using the tools.

Is my online transaction information secure?

In general, Internet transactions are not secure because they often are not encrypted. In some cases, however, transactions on the Western Washington University Libraries website occur using a SSL (Secure Socket Layer protocol) connection. This provides increased security to the information as it is transmitted. Only authorized library staff with assigned passwords may access personally identifiable information stored in Western Washington University Libraries' computer systems, and they may do this for the purpose of performing library work only. We are committed to protecting any personal information that you may provide to us. However, we cannot guarantee that your submissions to our website, any content residing on our servers, or any transmissions from our server will be completely secure.

Can I disable cookies and other tracking technologies?

Yes. You can disable cookies and other web technologies in your browser preference settings. However, please keep in mind that doing so may mean some features of the Library website will not function properly.

What information do you maintain in my Library Account?

What we collect:

- Western Washington University Libraries receives personal information from the Registrar's Office (for students) and from Human Resources (for employees) in order to create and update the library accounts of users affiliated with Western Washington University.

- Western Washington University Libraries obtains personal information about library users in order to maintain their library accounts. This includes information related to items you currently have checked out, your active loan requests, your InterLibrary Loan (ILL) records, and your library fines.
- Western Washington University Libraries collects and stores personal information users submit via the Libraries' web-based management tools—such as forms related to asking reference questions, requesting and renewing books and saving search histories or resource preferences.
- Library account information is stored in a system that can be accessed by our library catalog platform vendor, Ex Libris. Your personal information is protected by Ex Libris's cloud security and privacy practices, as well as by agreements between Orbis Cascade Alliance (of which Western is a member) and Ex Libris. You can find additional information in Ex Libris's "Cloud Security and Privacy Statement" here:
https://knowledge.exlibrisgroup.com/@api/deki/files/26641/Cloud_Security_and_Privacy_Statement.pdf
https://knowledge.exlibrisgroup.com/@api/deki/files/26641/Cloud_Security_and_Privacy_Statement.pdf

How we use it:

- To create user accounts and to ensure accurate account management
- To authenticate user access
- To provide enhanced online services based on user preference
- To ensure library account information is linked accurately with student account information maintained by the university

Can I see the information you are maintaining in my library account?

You are entitled to view your library account information and to amend information that is incorrect.

- If you are a student, you can correct your library account information via the Registrar's Office.
- If you are a Western Washington University employee, you can correct your library account information via your [myWestern](#) page.
- If you are a patron with borrowing privileges that originate from another library (Whatcom One Card, Orbis Cascade partner library, or library with

an MOU agreement with Western Libraries) you can correct your library account information associated with Western Libraries at the Circulation Desk. Please note, we cannot view or modify your account information for other libraries.

- If you are someone who has purchased borrowing privileges at Western Washington University Libraries, you can correct your library account information at the Circulation Desk by showing proper identification.

What about information gathered through other documents or forms such as a sign-in sheet, a service request, or an agreement?

In order to provide effective service, Western Washington University Libraries collects a variety of user information across its service areas. These often take the form of paper or electronic sign-in sheets, registers, logs, user agreements, or service request forms.

Sign-in sheets/Visitor registers

What we collect: At various service points we have visitor logs or sign-in forms used for accessing services or resources, such as visitor logs in Special Collections or the Archives Building, or Guest Computer Use sign-in sheets. These forms collect names, date/time, program visited, and in some cases topics related to research.

How we use it: These records are necessary to comply with building and resource access/use policies, as well as to ensure the security of unique collections.

Agreements and Request Forms

What we collect: In some cases, programs of Western Washington University Libraries request users to fill out an application form or sign an agreement in order to receive services or complete a transaction. These documents record personal information such as name, contact information, and possibly research content. Examples of these types of documents include:

- Research applications for archival and special collections access

- Duplication requests
- Permissions and licensing forms regarding use of unique collection content reproductions
- Donor forms and agreements such as deeds of gift and gift-in-kind records

How we use it: These records are required in order to ensure compliance with access policies, accurate delivery of copies, compliance with legal statutes, and/or to memorialize or uphold obligations articulated in donor agreements.

Requests for consultative interactions supporting students and other patrons

What we collect: Some service points in Western Washington University Libraries exist to provide support for academic activities, including research and writing support, tutoring, and information literacy. These areas may use dedicated forms and systems to facilitate interactions. These forms collect personal information such as name, contact information, student ID, date/time, and course information.

How we use it: These tools are used to facilitate more focused and productive interaction with users, as well as to provide statistical data documenting use of the services.

Do you collect personal information in user feedback, surveys, or interviews?

What we collect: Western Washington University Libraries collects mostly anonymous information from patrons who voluntarily participate in interviews or surveys we conduct as we assess the quality of our operations, services, and facilities.

How we use it: This information is used for assessment and improvement of Western Washington University Libraries facilities, resources, or services. The information is anonymized to the extent possible and is retained solely for the purpose of compiling internal assessments.

Do you retain personal information related to financial transactions? What about when I pay my library fines or pay for other services?

Western Washington University Libraries has both manual and online methods for recording your payments. The records differ for each method, but the records are secure in both cases:

Financial transactions (online)

What we collect: If you pay any fines or fees related to your library account using our online payment option, payment information is handled by a third party vendor under contract with Western Washington University, which credits your payment to your account in the university's Student Accounts system. Western Washington University Libraries does not retain any of your financial payment information via this transaction. Your library account information is updated from the university's Student Accounts system.

How we use it: We do not retain any residual financial records of this transaction other than updated information in your Library Account.

Financial transaction records (hard copy)

What we collect: Patrons who pay Library fines or who pay for other services such as duplication might make payments in person using cash, check, or credit card. In those cases, we create records relating to the transaction that might include name, date, possibly research content, and possibly credit card information.

How we use it: These records are required for documenting accurate financial transactions and for retaining auditable records. We retain these records in a locked room for a required retention period of six years, after which they are shredded.

What about images and audiovisual records of your patrons?

What we collect:

- Photographs or audiovisual recordings taken by Western Washington University Libraries staff at public library-hosted events.

How we use it:

- Created to record events for marketing, communications, analytics, or historical documentation.
- We obtain release authorizations for all presenters or other featured individuals in our events before creating and/or re-using images or audiovisual content.
- While incidental image capture of attendees at public events is not considered a breach of privacy, we will respect the wishes of those who contact us with a request not to disclose their image.

How can I contact you?

If you have questions about this policy or feel that Western Washington University Libraries has acted in violation of this policy, please contact libraryadministration@wwu.edu.

Any other information I need to know?

- Western Washington University Libraries also adheres to Western Washington University [Ethical Conduct with WWU Network and Computing Resources](#) published by [Academic and Technology User Services](#).
- The [American Library Association](#) provides information about the privacy and confidentiality principles supported by the library profession.