

Patron Guidelines for Instant Messaging Reference

Who can use Instant Messaging Reference?

Anyone with a home computer and an IM account may utilize this service. You can also IM a librarian without setting up an account using the IM box on the library's homepage, located at www.fpl.info.

When is IM Reference available?

IM Reference is available during the library's regular hours of operation:

Monday through Thursday: 9:30 am to 8:30 pm

Friday and Saturday: 9:30 am to 5:30 pm

What types of questions do you answer via IM?

IM reference service is designed to answer short, factual questions.

Examples might include:

- What is the toll free phone number for Delta College?
- How and when did Jerry Orbach die?
- What is the blue book value for my vehicle?
- Does the library own the latest book by Eric Jerome Dickey?

Tax consultation, legal advice, and medical opinions are not provided by Library staff.

How soon will I receive a response?

Library staff will make every effort to respond to IM questions in a timely manner.

However, there may be times when we are engaged with other patrons and may not be able to respond immediately.

Patron Confidentiality

The Flint Public Library respects patron privacy, but we cannot guarantee the privacy of files, email, or other information stored or transmitted electronically. Please do not submit sensitive factual information to the library via email or instant messaging. When providing virtual reference, the Flint Public Library will collect only the minimum personal information necessary for providing effective service.

Rules of Conduct

The Flint Public Library will not respond to questions that are considered offensive and/or inappropriate, in accordance with the library's Patron Conduct Guidelines.

Attempting to engage library staff in inappropriate questions will cause your session to be terminated.