

# Remote Patron Authentication Service (RPAS) Technical Bulletin

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# 1 About this Technical Bulletin

## 1.1 Purpose

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The *Remote Patron Authentication Service (RPAS) Technical Bulletin* provides general and technical information on Gale Group's RPAS system, which allows remote patrons to access your library's Gale Group subscription databases using the Internet. This bulletin explains how RPAS works and outlines the technical requirements needed to prepare your library for the installation of RPAS. This document also provides answers to frequently asked questions and lists Customer Service contact information.

## 1.2 Intended Audience

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This bulletin is intended for librarians and technical support staffs whose libraries currently have Gale Group subscriptions that they wish to make available via the Internet to their patrons.

## 1.3 Additional Information

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Contact Gale Group's Customer Service Operation groups at 1-800-877-GALE (1-800-877-4253) for further assistance. See Section 5 for a complete list of Customer Service contact information.



## 2 Overview

Section 2 provides a general overview of RPAS.

### 2.1 RPAS System Description

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Remote Patron Authentication Service (RPAS) is a free, automated service provided by Gale Group that distinguishes between library patrons using a personal computer *within* the library from remote patrons who have Internet access *outside* of the library, such as from their home, office, or school. RPAS recognizes remote patrons and performs a password authentication, allowing remote patrons to access the same Gale Group online subscriptions available to patrons within your library. In this way, RPAS enables your library to provide patrons boundary-free access to Gale Group before, during, and after regular library hours.

### 2.2 How RPAS Works

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Once RPAS is installed, a patron who has Internet access and a Web browser enters the URL for Gale Group, or clicks on the Gale Group link from your library's home page. RPAS immediately recognizes that the patron is outside your library based on the Internet protocol (IP) address of their computer, which is different from the IP addresses of your library's in-house computers. The remote patron is prompted to enter a password. This password identifies your library to the RPAS system. RPAS then calls your library's Web server and asks a specially designed program known as a CGI script to determine if the user is on the list of authorized remote patrons of the library. Your library's Web server then responds accordingly to RPAS, indicating "yes," or "no." If the remote patron is authorized, then access is allowed to the Gale Group and your library's name appears in the welcome message. If your library's Web server does not recognize the remote patron, then the user sees a message indicating access has been denied.

The authentication steps are summarized as follows:

1. **The remote patron connects to the Internet and launches a Web browser, such as Netscape or Internet Explorer.**

The remote patron may be at home, in a dorm room, or any other off-site location.

- 2. The remote patron enters the URL for Gale Group (or clicks on the Gale Group link from your library's home page).**

- 3. RPAS recognizes that the patron is accessing Gale Group remotely (outside of your library) and prompts the remote patron for a password.**

The password is supplied by your library and may be a barcode number. See Section 2.2.1 for more information on passwords.

- 4. RPAS recognizes the password as belonging to your library, an RPAS client.**

- 5. RPAS then calls your library's Web server and asks it if the password is valid, *i.e.*, does your library recognize the remote patron as an authorized user?**

See Section 2.2.2 for more information on Web servers.

- 6. Your server runs a specially designed program script, known as a CGI script and then replies to RPAS whether the user is authorized or not.**

- 7. RPAS lets authorized patrons into Gale Group, adding your library's name to the welcome message. Unauthorized users will see a message indicating that access to Gale Group has been denied.**

### **2.2.1 Password File**

Gale Group must verify if a potential user has been authorized to access your library's Gale Group subscriptions remotely. This is done through the use of a password file that your library maintains. The file contains a master list of all patrons who have 24-hour, Internet access to Gale Group with a unique password assigned to each. Example of passwords include the patron's name, a library card number, a combination of a username and password, or even a barcode number lookup.

See Section 2.2.2 for more information on what to do if your library does not have its own Web server.

Here are the steps needed to set up the password file:

- 1. Create a password for each of your patrons whom you want to have 24-hour, boundary-free access to Gale Group.**  
The password is created by your library. Each patron must have his/her own unique password.
- 2. Distribute these passwords to your patrons (printed on their library card, for example).**
- 3. Load this file on your library's Web server, on the server of your ISP or other third party service.**

See Section 2.2.2 for more information on Web servers.

- 4. Update this file on a schedule that is right for your needs.**  
A school may want to update their passwords once a semester or whenever new students enroll; a public library or a business may want to update it once per quarter or whenever new users come on board.

### **2.2.2 Web Server Options**

You have other options if your library does not have its own Web server to host the password file. One is to use a third party service, such as your Internet Service Provider (ISP) to host the password file for you. If you already use a service like this to host your library's home page then this might be the best course of action for you.

## **2.3 Using RPAS**

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RPAS enhances your library's value to its community by offering Gale Group databases to patrons at home, in dorms, or other off-site locations. There are no fees or additional charges associated with RPAS. Having RPAS in effect does not "use up" your subscription faster; the number of users allowed access is based on the subscription level your library purchased, regardless if the RPAS system is installed.

Aside from entering a password when prompted, the use of RPAS is transparent to the user; the remote patron has the same access to Gale Group databases as a patron inside the library. No special setup or configuration is necessary on the remote patron's computer or Web browser.



# 3 Technical Requirements

Section 3 is designed for the technical support person who understands Web server environments and simple interpreters. This section contains information on how to prepare your library for installation of RPAS. See Section 2 for a general overview of RPAS.

## 3.1 Required Library Setup

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To use RPAS, you must have access to a computer running a Web server. The Web server must:

- be configured to run a CGI script
- have a password database (or file) available to perform the password lookup

If your library does not have its own Web server, see Section 2.2.2 for additional options.

DRA PAC customers are a special case – they are not required to have a Web server.

In addition, you should make provisions for periodic updates of the password file. See Section 2.2.1 for more information on creating and maintaining the password file.

### 3.1.1 Configuring the CGI Script

The RPAS system uses a CGI script to extract the password (also known as the *remote patron identifier*) as sent by Gale Group and perform a simple ASCII file lookup against your password file. The file lookup may be performed on any one of the following:

- Library card number
- Combination of username/password
- Password only
- OPAC/Institution patron file
- Barcode pattern analysis

The CGI script may be written in Perl or some other interpreter environment. Gale Group has developed a sample CGI script which can be customized for your library. Gale Group's Customer Resource Center is prepared to assist your library staff in modifying this script for your specific needs.

Your library's CGI script can be stored either locally or on a Gale Group Web accessible server.

In the DRA PAC case, your Gale Group Customer Resource Center representative has a script which performs both the Web server and CGI script roles while directly interrogating the DRA patron file.

### 3.1.2 Using the Password File for Patron Authentication

To determine if a remote patron is authorized for Web access to Gale Group, RPAS prompts the user to enter a password. To authenticate the password, Gale Group's server transmits HTTP/1.0 requests to your library's designated Web server, where a CGI script or similar program then performs an ASCII file lookup against your password file. Your system responds with a status code indicating whether access to Gale Group should be allowed or denied.

Initially, NCSA basic authentication will be supported and Gale Group will transmit a username/password pair in the authorization header of its requests.

The Gale Group servers will make GET requests for URLs of the form:

**http://server-info/path-info/patron-info**

where:

- *server-info* indicates the host and port specification for your library's designated HTTP server
- *path-info* is the server-specific path to the CGI application that handles RPAS requests on your library's system
- *patron-info* contains the password (also known as the remote patron identifier) entered by the user with any special characters %-escaped as required by the HTTP protocol and URL syntax

Additional information, such as the IP address of the user, may be included in this part of the URL if required for authentication.

If the password specified in the URL exists and is authorized to access Gale Group, the authentication CGI script should return an HTTP 200 response with an arbitrary entitybody (arbitrary in the initial implementation; in the future, message bodies or multi-part responses may be of a well-defined format and Content-Type). If the password is not a known patron identifier for the library, a 253 (*i.e.*, Not found) response should be returned by the HTTP server/CGI. If desired, a 254 response may be returned to indicate that a password is known but is not allowed Gale Group access, or 253 may be used to mean all forms of "not authorized."

Gale Group may cache responses for one day or more to reduce remote authentication overhead.

### 3.1.3 Specifying the Host Name, Port, and Path

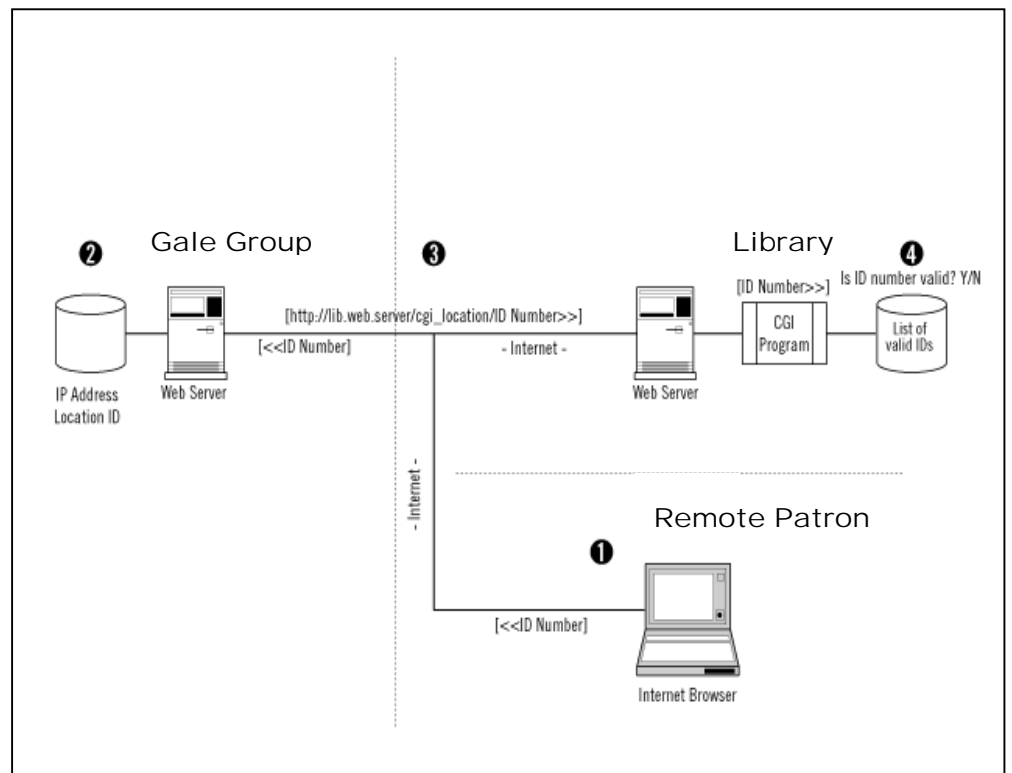
You will be asked to provide the following information to your Gale Group's Customer Technical Care representative to configure your location to use RPAS:

- **Host:** What is the Internet host name of the HTTP server used to answer requests from Gale Group's Web servers for validation of passwords?  
Example: *library.university.edu*
- **Port:** What is the TCP port number on the host that will answer RPAS requests from Gale Group?  
Example: *port 80*
- **Path:** What is the path to the CGI script on your location's HTTP server that will process and reply to requests from Gale Group? If your site requires a user ID/password pair for the HTTP Base Authentication, please provide this information also.  
Example: */cgi-bin/validate*

## 3.2 Summary of the Authentication Process

Figure 1 diagrams the authentication process.

Figure 1 –  
Authentication  
process



The authentication process shown in Figure 1 can be summarized as follows:

1. **Using an Internet browser, the remote patron attempts to access Gale Group and is prompted to enter a password.**  
Since the remote user's IP address differs from the known IP addresses of your library's in-house PCs, RPAS prompts the user to enter a password (ID Number).
2. **Gale Group's Web server recognizes the password as belonging to a patron of your library, an RPAS client.**
3. **Gale Group's Web server transmits an HTTP/1.0 request to your library's designated Web server using the host name, port, and path you provided.**

4. **Your library's CGI script then performs an ASCII file lookup against your password file and responds with a status code indicating whether access to Gale Group should be allowed or denied.**



# 4 Frequently Asked Questions

## 4.1 General Information

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### 4.1.1 What is RPAS?

RPAS stands for Remote Patron Authentication Service. It is a service provided by Gale Group to allow library patrons access to Gale Group resources from anywhere on the Internet, such as at home or school.

### 4.1.2 How does RPAS work?

When a remote patron attempts to connect to a Gale Group subscription, RPAS determines that his/her IP address is outside the range associated with your library. If you participate in RPAS, Gale Group prompts the user to enter a unique identifier (password). Gale Group then presents the password to a Web server designated by your library. This server uses a CGI script to perform a lookup against your library's password file and responds to Gale Group indicating whether the patron may access the service. If access is granted, Gale Group initiates a user session and displays the database menu/welcome page. If the user cannot be authenticated (*i.e.*, if the user is not listed in your password file), then a message indicating that access is denied is displayed.

### 4.1.3 How Does RPAS affect my subscription?

Having RPAS in effect does not "use up" your Gale Group subscription faster." If your library has purchased a simultaneous user level subscription, then each individual RPAS user is counted just as any other user accessing your subscription from within your library.

### 4.1.4 Does RPAS cost anything?

There are no fees or additional charges associated with RPAS.

#### **4.1.5 Are there any Gale Group subscriptions that cannot be accessed through RPAS?**

No. All subscriptions purchased by your library can be accessed remotely by patrons when RPAS is installed.

#### **4.1.6 Can RPAS be used to access subscription databases of other companies?**

No. Gale Group developed RPAS for use with Gale Group products.

#### **4.1.7 Are Gale Group subscriptions accessible using other authentication products?**

Yes. Gale Group is certified as a compliant vendor with the Remote Patron Authentication product from Epixtech and the soon to be released product from Data Research.

#### **4.1.8 Where can I find additional information?**

Contact your Gale Group Customer Technical Care representative at 1-800-877-GALE (4253).

## **4.2 Remote Patrons**

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#### **4.2.1 Who can be a remote patron?**

Any library patron may be designated as a remote patron. Simply include their name and password in the password file.

#### **4.2.2 How do remote patrons access Gale Group?**

Notify your remote patrons of their individual passwords and instruct them on how to access your library's Gale Group subscriptions as follows:

- 1. Once connected to the Internet, launch a Web browser, such as Netscape or Internet Explorer.**
- 2. Enter the URL for Gale Group (or click on the Gale Group link from the library's home page).**
- 3. When prompted, enter your password.**
- 4. Gale Group will authenticate your password and either allow access or deny it.**

Once access is granted, you may use Gale Group resources as if you were using a PC terminal at the library. If access is denied, a message will appear.

#### **4.2.3 Is any special configuration of Web browsers needed to use RPAS?**

Remote patrons do not have to configure their Web browsers or alter any settings on their computers in order to access Gale Group subscriptions using RPAS. In fact, aside from entering their password, remote patrons will not be aware that RPAS is in use.

#### **4.2.4 Will remote patrons have to navigate through extra screens?**

Remote patrons will have to enter a password, which is not required for patrons using computers within the library. This is the only extra step. Once access is allowed, the remote patron may use Gale Group resources in the same way that in-house patrons do.

#### **4.2.5 Can the library limit the number of remote patrons allowed to access Gale Group?**

Those patrons for whom remote access is not desired should not be included in the remote patron password file. Without a valid password, a remote user will not be able to gain access to Gale Group.

## **4.3 Passwords and the Password File**

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#### **4.3.1 Why is a password required?**

Gale Group needs a means to determine if your library has authorized a particular user to access its Gale Group resources. Gale Group does not track usage by individual users; the password is simply a means to distinguish authorized users from unauthorized users.

#### **4.3.2 Who creates and maintains the passwords?**

It is your library's responsibility to create and maintain the list of remote patrons and their passwords.

### **4.3.3 Can a universal password be used by all remote patrons?**

Gale Group advises against the use of a “universal” password as it may easily be “pirated” by Internet users outside your community. Unique passwords allow your library to keep access restricted to your patrons.

### **4.3.4 How frequently should the password file be updated?**

Update this file on a schedule that is right for your needs. A school may want to update their passwords once a semester or whenever new students enroll; a public library or a business may want to update it once per quarter or whenever new users come on board.

## **4.4 Technical Requirements**

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### **4.4.1 How do I get RPAS installed for my library?**

Contact your Gale Group Customer Technical Care representative at 1-800-877-GALE (4253). The following list summarizes the requirements needed to install RPAS:

**1. Your library must have its own Web server, or use a third-party service.**

The Web server (whether in-house or contracted) must be able to run CGI and Perl scripts (most servers can do this). You must provide Gale Group with your server’s host name and port number.

**2. You must have a password file (also known as a remote patron file).**

The password file contains the names and passwords of all remote patrons. This file must be stored on your designated Web server.

**3. A CGI script must be configured to validate passwords against your password file.**

Gale Group will assist you in modifying an existing CGI script and installing it on your designated Web server. You must provide Gale Group with access to this file by providing the file name and its path.

#### **4.4.2 Does my library need special software or equipment to use RPAS?**

No special software is required. Aside from having a Web server in-house, or access to one through a third-party provider, no other hardware is required.

#### **4.4.3 What if my library does not have its own Web server?**

If your library does not have its own server to host the password file, then your other option is to use a third party service, such as your Internet Service Provider (ISP) that would host the password file for you. If you already use a service like this to host your library's home page then this might be the best course of action for you.

#### **4.4.4 Is a sample CGI script available?**

Your Gale Group Customer Technical Care representative will provide a sample CGI script or assistance in configuring a script for your use.



# 5 Customer Resource Center

## 5.1 Customer Service Operations

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Gale Group is committed to supporting customers who use the Remote Patron Authentication Service (RPAS) for their GaleNet and InfoTrac subscriptions. Not only do we have a staff of customer support representatives trained to answer all your questions, but we have also employed the latest technologies to provide fast access to the help you need.

Please feel free to contact us at any time regarding your InfoTrac or GaleNet subscription. To expedite your requests, it helps to have your customer number on hand.

## 5.2 For U.S. and Canadian Customers

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### 5.2.1 Hours of Operation

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### 5.2.2 Telephone and Fax

To reach Gale Group, please call 1-800-877-GALE (4253), or 248-699-4253.

The above numbers connect you with all the departments you may need. To expedite your call, please have your customer number ready (if you do not know it, a representative will help you identify it).

Customer service or technical support questions may be faxed to the following number: 1-248-699-8093. Please include your customer number in your message if possible.

When contacting Gale Group, use the chart below to identify the department or person with whom you need to speak.

<b>For questions regarding...</b>	<b>Ask for...</b>
Subscription additions, changes, or renewals	Account Representative
Technical issues	Technical Support
Help with searching InfoTrac Web	Search Assistance*
Invoicing/Billing	Customer Service
Training	Account Representative
Other questions	Customer Service

\*About **Search Assistance**: Need help with search strategies? Gale Group's expert information specialists have more than 75 combined years of searching experience. In addition to the phone number listed above, you may contact Search Assistance by fax at 1-650-378-5442, or send e-mail to [contentqa@galegroup.com](mailto:contentqa@galegroup.com)

## 5.3 For International Customers

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### 5.3.1 Hours of Operation

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### 5.3.2 Telephone and Fax

In Latin America:

Tel: +1 305 443 0094

Fax: +1 305 443 5514

In Asia:

Tel: +60 3 731 6391

Fax: +60 3 731 1772

In Australia or New Zealand:

Tel: +61 (0) 3 9205 9691

Fax: +61 (0) 3 9205 9694

In the U.K., Europe, Africa or the Middle East:

Tel: +44 (0) 207 257 2930

Fax: +44 (0) 207 257 2940

## 5.4 Electronic Communication Systems

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### 5.4.1 E-mail

E-mail Customer Service and Technical Support questions to the address shown below for your region (please remember to include your customer number if you know it). Messages are checked daily and routed to the appropriate person for action.

Region	E-mail Address
U.S. and Canadian customers	technicalsupport@galegroup.com
Customers in Latin America, Asia Pacific, U.K., Africa, Europe, and the Middle East	globaltech@galegroup.com

### 5.4.2 Internet

#### Product News and Views

The reliability and accuracy you have come to expect from Gale Group can be accessed via our Web site at [www.galegroup.com](http://www.galegroup.com). International customers can use: [www.galegroup.com/world](http://www.galegroup.com/world).

Learn about our products and services by viewing product Web sites, product fact sheets, catalog entries, excerpts of reviews from news media, and sample pages and tables of contents. You can even order Gale Group print products online.

#### Timely Resources

We have developed complimentary information centers on [galegroup.com](http://galegroup.com). Countless librarians, patrons, teachers, and students have found our *Black History Month*, *Women's History Month*, *Hispanic History Month*, and *Poet's Corner* to be helpful and informative. Find biographies, timelines, quizzes, and more – absolutely free.

In addition, you will see *Lit Central*, where you will find old favorites such as *Gale's Literary Index*, plus new features including *Literary Times*, a timeline developed from *DISCovering Authors*; *Meet the Author*, a new author interview every month; and *Lit Kit*, a student-friendly resource developed to assist students with their literature research.

### Stay in Touch

Visit [www.galegroup.com](http://www.galegroup.com) to send us a message, join an e-mail list, search our online catalog, or review our tradeshow schedule. Bookmark it today!

## 5.5 Customer Notification Service

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The customer notification service is a primary means of notifying subscribers of news regarding their services, such as dates and times that server maintenance will be performed. Therefore, you will want to appoint a specific person within your organization to monitor this list.

The notification service enables you to communicate with Gale Group and other InfoTrac subscribers by posting your own messages. All subscribers to the list receive messages that you post, and vice versa.

To subscribe:

**1. Address an e-mail message to the following address:**

`listproc@sales.iacenter.com`

Leave the subject line blank.

**2. In the body of the message, type the following text on one line:**

`subscribe infotrac2000-L [your first name] [your last name]`

Do not use brackets in your message.

**3. Send the message.**

You will receive e-mail confirmation of your subscription, along with instructions for posting messages and unsubscribing.