City of Dallas Public Libraries

Internet Use

Presented to the Quality of Life Committee
February 12, 2008
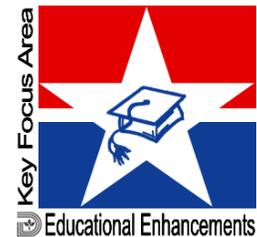
Dallas Public Library – Current Position

- 1997 DPL made Internet available to our customers

- It continues to be the mission of the Dallas Public Library to link resources and customers to enhance lives. Because the library is committed to its role in the self-learning process of our entire community, it views access to information to be a public right and a key element in this process

- The few complaints received at various locations were dealt with when they occurred

Dallas Public Library – Current position

- The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was placed on the books in 2000 but was not upheld by the Supreme Court until 2003 when it mandated internet filtering for libraries receiving federal funds in the area of technology

- Many libraries voluntarily complied under the original ruling and filtered Internet access

- The Act grants permission to libraries to establish a procedure for unblocking the filter at the request of an adult to permit lawful computer usage

- Dallas Public Library did not come under this mandate

- Dallas Public Library was able to make an informed decision which protects while providing access

Following the Issuance of Federal Guidelines in 2000 these Libraries Filtered Throughout Their Systems

- Arlington
- Houston
- Plano
- Phoenix
- San Diego
- Free Library of Philadelphia
- El Paso

The following Library Systems do not use filters

- Chicago
- Cleveland
- Long Beach
- Los Angeles
- Oakland
- San Antonio
- San Francisco
- San Jose
- Seattle

Internet Filtering Software

- What is filtering?
  - A Web filter is a program that can screen an incoming Web page to determine whether some or all of it should not be displayed to the user.

- The main advantage filtering software offers is that it tends to make it harder to access offensive material on the Internet.

- How do filters work:
  - The filter checks the content of a Web page against a set of rules provided by company or person who has installed the Web filter. A Web filter allows an enterprise or individual user to block out pages from Web sites that are likely to include objectionable advertising and content.

- Be aware that no filtering solution is full proof.

Internet Filtering Software

○ All filtering software works with one or a combination of the following three methods:

   I. Trusted Lists

      • Advantages

        ➢ An Trusted List is a list of 'safe' sites, sites that are thoroughly checked and deemed safe for the majority of the population to view. These sites generally consist of entertainment and education related sites.

      • Disadvantages

        ➢ The range of Trusted List content accessible is severely limited. They are definitely useful and safe, but the types of sites are so restricted that users miss out on a lot of the interesting, educational and informative content.

Internet Filtering Software

II. Non-Trusted Lists
- Advantages
  - A Non-Trusted List prevents access to a list of sites that contain content that is not deemed appropriate. These Lists are usually well maintained with adult content/themes that have been discovered by the maintainers of the filtering software regularly being added.

- Disadvantages
  - There are many ways to get around these lists, and the Internet is so vast and develops so rapidly that there is no guaranteed way to block all of the objectionable material.

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Internet Filtering Software

III. Keyword Filtering

- Advantages
  - Keyword Filtering reads each page as it is downloaded and searches for a list of 'key' words. Some filtering software will not display a page that contains any of the key words, and some just strip the word from the page. The major advantage to Keyword Filtering is that it can scan -any- site as needed, not relying on lists of sites compiled by the filtering software developers.

Internet Filtering Software

III. Keyword Filtering

- Disadvantages (continue)
  - There is no way for the software to understand the context of a word, so many sites are blocked although their content is not actually offensive. For example, one software package blocks sites that use such words as blonde, explosive, barely and amateur - these do regularly appear on Adult sites, but there are far more that use these words in a neutral manner.

  - Some software will remove only the 'offensive' words from the page. . .but will still display any images on the site, this technique often causes the meaning of sentences to be completely altered as key words are missing.

Internet Filtering Software

III. Keyword Filtering

- Disadvantages (continued)

  ➢ The other alternative for the software is to restrict access to the page entirely. Some software will display a reason why the page has been blocked, some just display a blank page instead of the offending content. Dealing with this latter technique can be fairly frustrating as you have no idea why the page has been censored.

Current Process – Managing Internet Use

○ Before a patron is granted access to the internet they must accept the <u>Internet</u> Acceptable Use Policy
   Link: <u>http://dallaslibrary.org/policy.htm</u>. (See appendix)

○ To enrich the internet experience for children a Parent's Guide to Supervising Children's Internet Experiences and rules for online safety is provided.
   Link: http://dallaslibrary.org/parent.htm (See appendix)
   Link: <u>http://dallaslibrary.org/safety.htm</u> (See appendix)

○ The Code of Conduct provides an additional tool that prohibits these behaviors under the Texas Penal Code. If patron is non-compliant, security is called and patron must leave the premises

Current Process – Managing Internet Use

- Computers are placed together in a public area, in clear view of library staff.

- When library staff sees inappropriate materials on a patron's computer, a pop up message is sent to that computer stating "Please be advised that this is an inappropriate use of this workstation according to the Library Internet Acceptable Use Policy. If this use continues, your session will end".

- Library staff also walk the floor to aid any patron needing help and to check for unacceptable content.

Proposed Method to Leverage Filtering

○ Configure the filtering software to present a message to the patron when possibly inappropriate content is accessed.

- Advantages
    - ○ The patron makes the choice of whether or not to continue to their selections.
    - ○ A message will be sent automatically to the librarian computer when inappropriate content is accessed on the internet.
        - Library staff will receive a message indicating the PC that has accessed the unacceptable internet content.
    - ○ Library staff does not have to rely solely upon visual observation as the only means of monitoring the use of the Internet.

Municipal Library Board Presentation

- On January 29, 2008 the Municipal Library Board was briefed.

- The Municipal Library Board unanimously approved a motion to "adopt the proposed process of Electronic Management to handle inappropriate use of the internet."

To Sum Up …

- Software filtering will prevent access to the more obvious offensive sites, but as mentioned, there are still many ways to get around it. It cannot be stressed enough that the best solution to prevent access to inappropriate Internet content is ALWAYS through monitoring usage.

- The solution proposed will enhance the current monitoring practices of the Library staff.

Appendix

CITY OF DALLAS

LIBRARIES AND RECREATION CENTERS CODE OF CONDUCT

City staff is committed to providing the best possible customer service in an open and inviting atmosphere and the City of Dallas Libraries and Recreation Centers Code of Conduct is designed to ensure this atmosphere is maintained at all times.

Violations of the City of Dallas Libraries and Recreation Centers Code of Conduct or procedures may result in the expulsion of individuals from City premises and/or criminal prosecution.

In keeping with the City's commitment to customer service and the provision of a safe and inviting atmosphere, the following guidelines are set forth to define those activities that are inappropriate for our users and prohibited. City staff will enforce these guidelines in a consistent and impartial manner. The following behaviors, conduct and activities are expressly prohibited:

Prohibited behaviors under the Texas Penal Code:
- Recklessly damaging or destroying City materials or property, or the personal property of building customers or staff. (Texas Penal Code § 28.04)
- Gambling in any form on City property. (Texas Penal Code § 47.02)
- Making offensive gestures, cursing or using obscene, abusive, profane or threatening language. (Texas Penal Code § 42.01)
- Displaying or distributing obscene material. (Texas Penal Code § 43.22 and § 43.24)
- Engaging in acts of sexual misconduct, including, but not limited to, indecent exposure, sexual contact and sexual intercourse. (Texas Penal Code § 21.07 and 21.08)
- Stalking other customers or staff including looking into an area, such as a restroom, that is designed to provide privacy to a person using the area. (Texas Penal Code § 42.01 and § 42.072); ((Dallas City Code § 31-36))
- Exhibiting signs of being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances. (Texas Penal Code § 49.02)
- Displaying firearms or other deadly weapons on City property in a manner calculated to alarm. Exemptions from this prohibition are recognized for Law Enforcement Officers and individuals licensed to carry handguns in accordance with state law. (Texas Penal Code § 42.01 and § 30.06e)
- Engaging in physical altercations including assaults and fighting. (Texas Penal Code § 22.01)

Prohibited behaviors under the Dallas City Code
- Entering or remaining in a City building before or after posted hours of operation without the express permission of the Department Director or Director's designee. (Dallas City Code § 31-37)
- Smoking or using tobacco products in City buildings. (Dallas City Code § 41-2)
- Entering into staff work areas not open to the public. (Dallas City Code § 31-14)
- Littering. (Dallas City Code § 7A-3)
- Consuming or possessing alcoholic beverages on City property or while in a public park. (Dallas City Code § 6-6.1 and § 32-11.3)

The following behaviors are prohibited if in the clear judgment of city staff, on a case-by-case basis, they disrupt the environment for other users of the facilities:
- Conversing, laughing, or otherwise talking or shouting in a loud and disruptive manner, banging on computer keyboards or disruptively using devices, including cell phones, CD players, MP3 players, walkie-talkies, PDAs, laptop computers or any other instruments. (Making sounds that are considered loud or disruptive when they are clearly audible from a distance of 3 feet by any other building user or staff member.) Sound generating or amplification devices employed by building staff or used by persons with the authorization of building staff for authorized events are exempt from this prohibition.
- Using City buildings for other than their intended purpose, including: loitering, sleeping, changing clothes, bathing (except for washing hands or face), shampooing, shaving, washing clothes or utensils, preparing meals or food, or personal grooming unless it is considered appropriate for an approved activity. Changing clothes in building bathrooms and applying makeup is permitted in preparation for a city-approved program or event with express permission of City staff.
- Eating, drinking, or bringing food or beverages in open containers into a City building is prohibited, except in cases where an event has been previously approved.
- Bare feet and bathing suits or clothing that does not cover both upper and lower torso is prohibited in public areas unless it is considered appropriate for an approved activity.
- Introducing any animals, insects or other living organisms into City buildings without express permission of the City staff, with the exception of service animals, such as seeing-eye dogs or other guide-trained animals.
- Using wheeled recreational devices such as skateboards, roller skates, roller blades, bicycles, and scooters in or on City property, except in designated areas.
- Entering, or attempting to enter City buildings possessing such defects of bodily hygiene as impairs a clean and sanitary environment, as it is intended for enjoyment of the building. This includes individuals whose neglect of bodily hygiene gives offense and therefore constitutes a nuisance to others and staff.
- Entering into or remaining in City buildings while emitting odors (including bodily odors or perfumes), which interfere with the use of services by other users or the work of staff.
- Entering into City buildings with large framed backpacks, bedrolls, blanket rolls, or more than three grocery-sized paper or plastic bags or parcels. Personal belongings including purses or cell phones must not impede access to doors, services or materials. Customers must keep personal belongings with them at all times. The City is not responsible for unattended personal belongings.
- No soliciting or proselytizing on City property, except as authorized. No panhandling at any time.
- Neglecting to provide proper supervision of children.
- Using areas for any activities, other than their intended purpose.
- Physically blocking aisles, exits, or entrances, including sitting or lying down in them.
- Moving, altering, or rearranging furniture or equipment; altering the configuration or settings of electronic equipment without the authorization of staff; or otherwise using furniture or equipment for other than its intended purpose.
- Using electronic equipment in excess of posted duration limits if other customers or staff are waiting to use the equipment.
- Assembling more than two people around a computer if it creates a disturbance to others.
- Use of parking lot before or after hours of operation or for performing non-emergency automotive repairs or maintenance at any time.
- Engaging in any other activity that disturbs normal activities and/or the environment for other users and City staff.

City of Dallas

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Parents' Guide to Supervising Children's Internet Experiences

The Internet, a global, decentralized network of computers, provides a means to access information far beyond the Library's own collections. The Internet is also a new opportunity for children to expand their minds and experiences, and to develop skills necessary for the future. The quality of a child's experience will be directly related to a parent's investment in that experience. If you take the time, you can make your child's Internet activities positive, productive, and educational.

No individual, company, or government controls or monitors the Internet. While most of the information accessed can be valuable and enlightening, the user may also find materials that are unreliable, personally offensive, or illegal under U.S. law. Therefore, parents are advised to supervise their children's Internet sessions at the Library. By taking responsibility for their children's online computer use, whether at the Library or at home, parents can minimize any potential risks associated with online computer use.

Most of the following guidelines apply to home use of the Internet. However, there are many suggestions here that will help you monitor your child's use of the Internet at the Library.

- **Be aware** of your children's online activities. If certain online material is offensive to you, take the time to teach your child your values. Explain to your child why you believe the material is wrong and the harm you believe it might cause.

- Should you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of **child pornography** while online, immediately notify your online service, if at home, or the librarian, if at the Library. You should also report it to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children by calling 1-800-843-5678.

- **Never give out identifying information**—home address, school name, or telephone number—in a public message or anywhere else, and be sure you're dealing with someone whom both you and your children know and trust before giving out any information via e-mail. Think carefully before revealing any personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information. Consider using a pseudonym or unlisting your child's name if your Internet Service Provider allows it.

- Have your child **use a nickname** distinct from his or her real name when entering chat rooms, bulletin boards, and other public rooms.

- **Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting** with another computer user without parental permission. If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public spot, and be sure to accompany your child.

- **Never respond to messages that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or make you feel uncomfortable.** Encourage your children to tell you if they encounter such messages. If you or your child receives a message that is harassing, of a sexual nature, or threatening, forward a copy of the message to your service provider and ask for their assistance.

- Remember that **people online may not be who they seem**. Because you can't see or hear the

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File   Edit   View   Favorites   Tools   Help

Back   Search   Favorites

Address   http://dallaslibrary.org/policy.htm

▌▌dallaspubliclibrary

(214) 670-1400 | webmaster@dallaslibrary.org

Policies

- Internet Acceptable Use
- Texas Penal Code: Chapter 43
- USA Patriot Act Warning
- Code of Conduct

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

T he Internet provides a means to access information far beyond the Library's own collections. The Internet is a gateway to information of great diversity in many countries and cultures around the world. Because of its international character, however, there is no external monitoring of the Internet.

While most of the information accessed can be valuable and enlightening, the user may also find materials that are unreliable, personally offensive, or illegal under U.S. law (see also USA PATRIOT act). The Library cannot police a global network and each individual user must take responsibility for his or her own activities on the Internet and for the activities of his or her children.

Parents are advised to supervise their children's Internet sessions and may wish to review the Library's publication, *Parents' Guide to Supervising Children's Internet Experiences*.

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All Internet resources accessible through the Library are provided equally to all Library customers. However, use of the Internet must be compatible with the Mission of the Library. It is the responsibility of each user to be guided by the following principles:

- Respect for the privacy and sensibilities of other users.
- Attention to the legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs and data.
- Consideration for the integrity of computing systems. For example, users must not intentionally develop programs to harass other users or to infiltrate a computer or computing system, or develop programs that may damage or alter the software components of this or other computing systems.

Further examples of unacceptable use include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Damaging or destroying equipment, software, or data belonging to the Library or to other users, including adding, altering, or deleting files on Library workstation hard drives or other Library computer equipment.

Done   Local intranet

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