RICHMOND VIRGINIA **POLICY**	SECTION: 6.2 SUBJECT: Internet Filtering

A new Virginia statute took effect July 1, 2007 requiring public libraries receiving state funds to filter public internet access. Richmond Public Library receives $150-200,000 in state funding each year through State Aid to Public Libraries.

- This statute requires that libraries install filters to block internet access to "child pornography…obscenity…and, with respect to minors, materials deemed harmful to juveniles…."
- Richmond Public Library has installed Websense as the filtering software.
- Customers can ask that the filter be disabled. Library users under the age of 18 must fill out a "Request to Disable Internet Filtering Software" form; library users 18 and over may verbally request the filter be disabled, and should not fill out a form. Staff will disable the filter upon request for any customer.
- The City's Department of Information Technology worked with the library to implement the filtering software. A staff work group reviewed the filtering settings that have been implemented.
- The Library Board has adopted an internet use policy, which has been posted on Starnet and on the G Drive (Computer and Acceptable Internet Use, Section 6.1 of the Policy Manual).
- The Acceptable Internet Use policy should be enforced in conjunction with the Internet Filtering Policy.
- Each of the other library systems in the immediate Richmond area (Henrico, Chesterfield, Pamunkey Regional) filter internet access. As far as we know, *all* public libraries in Virginia are now filtering internet access.

Some Q&A for filtering questions from the public:

- Why are you filtering internet access?

    A new Virginia law took effect July 1, 2007 requiring public libraries that receive state funds to filter internet access by the public. Most, if not all, public libraries in Virginia now filter internet access on library public PC's.

- What filtering software are you using?

    We use Websense. This is a product used by other public libraries, including Chesterfield County Public Libraries.

- Can I ask you to unblock the filter?

    Yes, you will be able to ask us to unblock the filter "for bona fide research or other lawful purposes" (quoting from the new state law). A form is provided for library users under 18 years of age to request that the filter be disabled. This form is required at the request of the City Attorney, to document that the library meets the requirement of the state statute for protecting juveniles from potentially harmful materials.

- <u>If I come to the library and use your WiFi, will internet access on my laptop be filtered?</u>

  Public libraries only are required to filter the public access PC's provided by the library, so your own laptop will not be filtered through our WiFi. You are still required to abide by our acceptable internet use policies, however, and if you are accessing internet sites that are in conflict with our acceptable use policy we will ask you to leave. (Computer and Acceptable Internet Use policy, Section 6.1 in RPL Manual)

- <u>No other library in the area filters internet access. Why is Richmond Public Library doing this?</u>

  This new Virginia law requires all Virginia public libraries that receive state funds (which is all of them) to filter internet access now. The public libraries in the immediate area (Chesterfield, Henrico, and Pamunkey Regional) have filtered internet access for some time.

- <u>Who can I contact for more information?</u>

  You can contact the Library Director or one of the Assistant Directors for more information. Their offices are at the Main Library, and you can contact any of them by phone at 804.646.4256.

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