

From: "Ray Cox" <ray@raycox.net>
Date: Thu, 27 May 2004 06:31:25 -0500
Cc: Griff Wigley <griff@wigleyandassociates.com>
Subject: [Nfld Issues] filtering
Reply-To: "An all-purpose civic issues email discussion list for Northfield, MN area citizens" <issues@nfld.us>
To: Adam Gurno <abg@norlug.org>

The whole filtering issue is not easy to wrestle with on a legislative or government level. I do think it is appropriate to place some limits on what web sites are accessible from public computers. I suppose there could be a process where people submit to have an "over ride" authorized for some reason...but that simply transfers a desire for governmental filtering to the local librarian.

I think we have had mild forms of filtering going on in libraries for a long time with written material. Libraries don't subscribe to every magazine or book published. You can ask for a particular item, but they do not have to purchase it for you. I imagine many libraries have made purchasing decisions based on the content of some publications. And what might be appropriate for a research library might not be such a good idea in a high school library.

The human based filtering decision method can work well. The sheer volume of the electronic world begs to have an automated system of some sort. I suspect that as fast as the automated systems are created, the operators of some sites will find ways to navigate around the filters...so we may be back to the human system!

Like so many things...no easy answers here.

Ray Cox

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