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## Civic Courage: One Librarian's Protest Against Web Filtering

Christine H. Murphy

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## Civic Courage: One Librarian's Protest Against Web Filtering

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**Civic Courage: One Librarian's Protest Against Web Filtering**

**A Graduate Research Paper**

**Submitted to the**

**Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

**Division of School Library Media Studies**

**in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree**

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**by**

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## Abstract

The goal of this research paper was to describe one Waterloo Community School District elementary school librarian's experiences in dealing with a District-imposed Internet filter. An Internet filter was imposed on public schools and their library media programs in the Waterloo Community School District (WCSD). The population of this study consisted of various administrators, School Board members, District facilitators, coordinators, principals, computer technicians, teachers, and secretaries. Data collection methods for this descriptive research included notation, description, analysis, and questioning. The researcher gathered articles from newspapers and periodicals, videotaped and audiotaped meetings, communicated with and kept records of personal email messages with key informants, attended meetings, held conversations, conducted informal interviews, and used the Internet. The most prevalent technique to record data was journaling in notation and description to document incidents as they happened. After data were collected from August of 1999 through September of 2001, they were presented in descriptive narrative form in chronological order by month.

Five research questions were investigated. The first question concerned why the District administration felt the need for an Internet filter on all school computers. Although interviewing the Superintendent might have helped answer this question, the researcher was reluctant to do that because of possibly being perceived as a threat to the peaceful acceptance of the decision to filter. Instead, the researcher heard at a meeting that the Superintendent believed a filter would protect the District's students online, and therefore convinced the School Board to formally approve the installation of filtering hardware and software. The second research question asked what filter the District chose and why it was chosen. After the researcher attended meetings, it was found that the filter Bess by N2H2 was chosen because it was offered to the WCSD free and was highly rated by its accompanying literature. Near the end of the data collection period for this project, however, the District was testing the filter X-Stop, but had not decided whether to switch permanently to X-Stop. How the filter worked was the next research question. The researcher obtained literature about Bess and X-Stop and learned that they both worked at the District server level by blocking within several different selected categories and by blocking certain keywords and URLs. Through informal questioning, it was discovered that the filter settings were applied in the same configuration for all computers in the WCSD; district computer technicians were being filtered in the same way as students of all ages. Through email messages and personal conversations, it was learned that only two people in the District knew and were authorized to use the override password. By personal experience, it was found

that both filters inadvertently blocked many appropriate sites and failed to block some inappropriate sites for users, regardless of the age level of students.

The fourth research question concerned the cognitive and affective results of filter use on the learning experiences of children in the District. The results were obvious and discovered through analysis of personal communication, questioning, and general observation. Because the filter's parameters were applied in the same configuration for all students regardless of age, Internet sites deemed inappropriate for kindergartners were also deemed inappropriate for the District's college-bound, advanced placement eighteen-year-old seniors. Students of all ages were blocked from pertinent information they needed that was readily available on the Internet, sometimes influencing whether the synthesis and evaluation stages of higher level thinking skills could develop adequately in their learning. Even elementary students voiced frustration when they were blocked from sites at school that they wanted to access for information. They openly asked teachers why they could not access certain sites. High school students unequivocally declared their frustrations with being blocked, and many asserted that they would conduct research at home instead of at school in order to access information from all available online resources. Students who did not have access to the Internet at home were left with no recourse but to seek unfiltered computers elsewhere or to use filtered computers at school.

The fifth and final research question of this study examined the alternatives to filtering in the Waterloo Community School District. Viable alternatives were found through reading and studying journal articles and research papers. Alternatives include educating students and staff about becoming efficient, evaluative, and effective searchers for information on the Internet; refining and enforcing the District's Acceptable Use Policy; having available lists of appropriate Internet sites that are preselected by teachers or librarians; integrating selected websites into electronic catalogs, and monitoring student use of the Internet more effectively.

During the span of this study, nineteen useful sites were documented as blocked by the District's Internet filter. Some were eventually unblocked by one of the two people in the District who were authorized to use the override password. Two inappropriate sites were documented as not blocked by the District's Internet filter and were therefore accessible to students of all ages. One site was eventually blocked after it was reported to the District by a librarian. The other inappropriate site was not reported by the same librarian for fear that even more blocking restrictions would result.



# Civic Courage: One Librarian's Protest Against Web Filtering

## Chapter I

### Introduction

**The Board also will decide on a new Internet filtering system. ... Service to The Bess Partner Program is free. Sponsors assume all costs, including a set-up fee of \$4,000 and annual filtering fee of \$9,400.**

... from page C3 story in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier  
November 21, 1999, by Stacy Nick

### Background

Those statements were contained in an article concerning the consideration of an Internet filter for public schools in Waterloo, Iowa (See Appendix A). A second newspaper article (Appendix B) six weeks later reported, "The Waterloo Board of Education will once again look at using an Internet filtering service that would save it \$25,000 over two years" (Nick, 2000, January 9, p. C3). Those two newspaper articles were both quick to point out cost and how much money would be saved, but neither article mentioned dangers to First Amendment or intellectual freedom rights. A related announcement was published two days later in another article in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier (Appendix C). It stated, "In a unanimous decision Monday, the Waterloo Board of Education approved a new Internet filtering site for the District" (Nick, 2000, January 11, p. B3). This paper will describe an elementary school librarian's experience with filtering issues in the Waterloo Community School District.

### The Development of the Internet

The Internet is a vast, worldwide network of networks. It was first developed in the 1960s by the United States Defense Department to enable

military and academic research of sensitive topics to be conducted and shared, even during a nuclear disaster. The Internet was designed so that no one could own it, thoroughly control it, or deny anyone access to the network, especially in times of an emergency. In the beginning, it was used only by military and educational research institutions. No one fathomed the worldwide appeal it would later produce (Friedman, 2000, p. 32).

In the 1990s, the Internet began to grow at a phenomenal rate. What was once a hobby or interesting pastime for a few became a necessity for many (Kehoe, 1997, p.1). Recent growth of the Internet has been truly explosive. In 1989, there were more than 100,000 host computers connected to the Internet, but by early 2001, there were nearly 110,000,000, according to Zakon (Hobbes' Internet Timeline, retrieved July 4, 2001, from <http://www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline/#2000s>). Waltermann and Machill (2000) wrote that the Internet has become the most important means of communication since the development of the printing press in the 15th Century (p.124).

The World Wide Web, sometimes called the WWW or Web, is really an interconnected set of millions of pieces of information located throughout the Internet, around the world. The term World Wide Web is sometimes used synonymously with the Internet, but it is really only a major component of the Internet (Classroom Connect, 1997, p. 290).

While the Internet has greatly stimulated business, education has just begun experimenting to find the best ways to integrate this bountiful, relatively new resource into the curriculum (Jukes, 2000, p. 3). The Web truly provides "fingertip access" to worlds of information (Wolfe, 2001, p. 2). Many educators agree that the Internet has become the most valuable educational resource since the encyclopedia and a crucial learning tool for the 21st Century. It

inspires and engages students of all ages, making learning more fun and teachers' lesson plans more effective (Marcroft, 1998, p. 52). Online resources are available for virtually every curriculum area, providing students with the opportunity to examine a wide range of information and to then apply what has been learned to meaningful projects (Jukes, 2000, p. 5). All Internet resources are not useful in the classroom, however.

What makes the Internet wonderful is also the source of its greatest controversy. The good, the bad, the ugly, the inaccurate, and the outdated: the Internet democratically brings all of it to our living rooms, schools, and libraries. With the click of a mouse, we can read about new air pollution standards, follow the burial of Princess Diana, learn opposing viewpoints on abortion, play chess, buy books, send money to a favorite cause, make acquaintances, and view child pornography. In no other medium except, perhaps, a New York subway do we see so many examples of human strengths and frailties jostling side by side. (Schneider, 1997, p. xiii)

This tremendous variety of available information leads to one of the most difficult issues the library profession has ever faced: whether Internet content can or should be limited in library settings (Schneider, 1997, p. xi). Many librarians believe strongly that libraries should consider the Internet an opportunity to provide all available information and that intentionally limiting Internet information is a form of censorship (Schneider, 1997, p. xiii). Others believe it is important to protect America's children from harm online, even though regulating Internet access for children challenges rights set forth in the United States Constitution (Friedman, 2000, p. 10).

## Internet Filtering

In the last few years, the Internet has become heavily graphically oriented, and that is why it has become so controversial in the educational setting (Schuyler, 1997, p. 34). The displaying of diagrams, photographs, video clips, and other graphical information makes it possible for both desirable and undesirable graphics to be posted on the Internet; this results in the idea of filtering the Internet's content for minors, even though there are current laws in effect that prohibit child pornography, even on the Internet (The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, retrieved August 8, 2001, from [http://www.missingkids.com/html/ncmec\\_default\\_ec\\_chldporn\\_laws.html](http://www.missingkids.com/html/ncmec_default_ec_chldporn_laws.html)).

Most filtering software was originally designed for the home market to allow parents to make decisions for their children (ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee, 2000, retrieved July 4, 2001, from [http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/filt\\_stm.html](http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/filt_stm.html)). Different filtering methods and software tools to block Internet content have evolved for the education market. Schneider calls these "mechanical tools wrapped around subjective judgment" (1997, p. xiv). Berry (1997, p. 6) writes that educators sometimes install filters as quick fixes to give peace of mind, rather than find better solutions to library and classroom management problems. Filters can even block out information schools purchase with school funds. For instance, many school libraries subscribe to a variety of subject databases to provide specialized information for students. For many schools using filtering software, searching for information on these fee-based databases can also be affected by filtering, blocking out some valuable, already paid for, information. Therefore, not only are free websites being filtered, but also fee-based subscription databases.

### Intellectual freedom.

No matter how people view filtering, access to a filtered Internet is not just a technological challenge, but also a political and philosophical one (Chapin, 1999, p. 18). These challenges stem from limiting access to information and are directly related to the First Amendment to our Constitution and the concept of intellectual freedom.

The First Amendment was written to prevent federal as well as state governments from limiting free expression, including speech and print media (Friedman, 2000, p. 28). It states:

Congress Shall Make No Law Respecting an Establishment of Religion, or Prohibiting the Free Exercise Thereof; or Abridging the Freedom of Speech, or of the Press; or the Right of the People Peaceably to Assemble, and To Petition the Government for a Redress of Grievances. (First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution, 1791)

The heated controversy over whether limiting access to Internet resources by filtering is a violation of First Amendment rights continues to rage. Friedman (2000) wrote, "As the media continues to expand its role into the area of communication technology, the government's control of media regulation and oversight of First Amendment protection has also grown" ( p. 26).

### Children's rights.

Under the United States Constitution, everyone has rights. Different rules apply to children because it is assumed that they lack the maturity to make wise decisions. Often the law defers to parents or other adults to know and choose what is best for children. This includes schools, where teachers and administrators are supposed to have students' best interests at heart as they

direct their education, writes Kowalski (2000, pp. 8-9), an award-winning children's author. Bandman, a noted Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, writes that schools sometimes turn into testing grounds for children's rights (1999, p. xxix).

A 1998 study predicts that by 2002, 31 million children will be online, with more than half of those under age thirteen. Although the Internet presents incredible technological opportunities, it also poses new questions about children's rights (Kowalski, 2000, p. 71). Bandman (1999) wrote that children have legal, moral, and intellectual rights (p. xxix). He noted four positions people take on children's rights: Children have no rights, children have rights to be cared for but no rights to freedom or enlightenment, children have rights to freedom, care, and enlightenment but with appropriate constraints, and children have the same rights as adults. Bandman supported the opinion that children should have rights but with appropriate constraints (1999, p. 192). He stressed that children should not be given unlimited freedom, but rather should be guided to know how to handle freedoms as they mature (1999, p. 243).

Buckingham, a Professor of Education at the University of London, believes differently. He disagrees with the argument that children's vulnerability should be the basis for denying them access to knowledge, including Internet resources. Buckingham believes that children who are determined to find hard-core pornography or racist propaganda are likely to find it in any case, irrespective of technological constraints imposed, such as Internet filters. Instead, Buckingham sees blocking software as a fundamental infringement of children's rights, and he feels that children simply need to learn how to protect themselves online. He believes that issues of child protection on the Internet need to be rethought of as issues of education, such as in educating children to

not share personal information online and to learn to critically evaluate information they find (2000, pp. 200-201).

American library response to Internet filtering.

The American Library Association (ALA), a 58,000-member library advocacy group, has been at the forefront of the legal battle to protect citizens' rights to free speech on the Internet. This national organization provides guidance for libraries in developing and implementing policies to ensure the highest quality library and information services (ALA (2001), *Libraries & the Internet Toolkit*, p.15). In 1948, the ALA adopted what is called the Library Bill of Rights, which is an affirmation of basic policies of free access to libraries and library materials. This list of rights was amended in 1961 and 1980 and reaffirmed in 1996. The Library Bill of Rights implies that restricting or limiting access to electronic information is a major barrier between students and resources, thus infringing on the right of intellectual freedom (ALA Council, 2000). The Library Bill of Rights is listed as Appendix D.

Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored. Intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas. (Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q & A, retrieved July 21, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/intellectualfreedomandcensorship.html>)

Librarians are trained to uphold the concept of intellectual freedom and to defend free access to materials that are protected by First Amendment rights. As a recently-trained librarian and as a member of the American Library

Association, the researcher cares deeply about the rights of children and others to access information on the Internet. She feels very strongly that Internet filters block useful information, and as a result of her training and personal convictions, wants to do everything in her power to prevent her school district from installing an internet filter. The researcher believes filters give a false sense of security and do not teach students how to be truly safe on the Internet.

The Office for Intellectual Freedom was created within the ALA to help implement ALA policies concerning the concept of intellectual freedom as contained in the Library Bill of Rights. The goal of the Office for Intellectual Freedom is to educate librarians and the general public about the nature and importance of intellectual freedom in libraries. It provides advice and information on many issues, including how to handle various kinds of censorship, which involves filtering of Internet resources (Office of Intellectual Freedom, retrieved July 4, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/index.html>).

Several leaders in school librarianship have been vocal in their opposition to the use of filters on the grounds of infringement of First Amendment and intellectual freedom rights. Doug Johnson of Mankato Public Schools in Mankato, MN, wrote that the use of Internet filters “conflicts with the precepts of intellectual freedom and the mission of public institutions” (1998, p. 11). Jamie McKenzie wrote, “This nation was founded by those who fled a world where one group might dictate matters of belief and conscience to others. We created the Constitution, in part, to protect citizens from government imposed orthodoxies” (1996, retrieved July 5, 2001, from <http://fno.org/mar96/whynot.html>). These two are not alone in their convictions. The ALA supports parents’ rights in taking an active role in monitoring their children’s use of library resources, but not at the expense of other people’s rights, or the rights of other



people's children. The ALA does not recommend the use in libraries of filtering technology that blocks constitutionally protected information (ALA, 2001, retrieved July 5, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/internettoolkit.html>).

#### Legal response.

Conversely, through the efforts of organized conservative groups, virtually every session of Congress, as well as state legislatures, now introduces sweeping antipornography, antigay, or parental rights legislation aimed at limiting the availability of constitutionally protected information to minors in schools (ALA, 1996, p. xv). Just as the Supreme Court's decision in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico* protected students' rights to access books on school library shelves, the first attempts by Congress to impose laws to limit Internet access of minors have also been struck down, reinforcing the rights of children. The Communications Decency Act of 1996 was an attempt by the federal government to regulate what is put on the Web. That law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on June 26, 1997, on the grounds that it violated the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech (Pownell, 1999, p. 51).

Next to be voted into law was the 1998 Child Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which restricted minors from accessing commercial Internet sites containing harmful materials and required commercial websites directed at children to show verifiable parental consent (Lindroth, 2000, p. 18). The law also required that a special commission, the Child Online Protection Act Commission (COPA Commission), be established to investigate ways to protect children online. On October 22 of that same year, in federal district court in Philadelphia, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed papers seeking an injunction against the newly minted law. Their request was successful on

November 19 when a judge issued a temporary restraining order barring enforcement of the law. The COPPA was eventually struck down as unconstitutional on June 23, 2000, by a federal appeals court in Philadelphia (Morrissey, 1999, retrieved July 21, 2001, from <http://www.llrx.com/congress/011599.htm>).

#### Current legislation.

Conservative groups did not give up, and mandatory Internet filtering received legislative approval on December 21, 2000, with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the companion Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (NCIPA). Those laws mandate that public libraries and K-12 schools receiving certain types of federal technology funding discounts must install content filters on all computers with Internet access. The funding sources include the Universal Service discount program known as E-rate, the Library Services and Technology Act, and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, all of which enable schools and libraries to provide access to online resources. Schools and libraries that choose not to comply with the new laws will lose the special technology funding discounts they receive (Kennedy, 2001, p. 26). Those discounts range from 20 percent in more affluent areas to 90 percent for the schools and libraries serving the poorest people (Consumer Reports, 2001, p. 21).

The CIPA and NCIPA are fairly complex, in that they set several requirements for schools and libraries to continue to qualify for the special technology funding. Among those conditions are requiring schools to adopt Internet safety policies, also known as Acceptable Use Policies (AUP), and to provide notice of and hold at least one public hearing or meeting on the proposed AUP. Schools and libraries also are required to certify that they have

adopted and implemented an AUP that includes operation of a technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors. The new statute took effect on April 20, 2001, but contains provisions to phase in compliance by schools and libraries. In the first program year, certification must verify that a school or library is researching filtering options and working towards putting an AUP in place that meets specific requirements. In the second year, libraries and schools must certify that they actually have the AUP with the required technology in place. Therefore, the actual installation and use of an Internet filter may not need to be in place until some time in 2002. Another study of children's Internet safety is also directed by these new laws, and the study is to evaluate whether currently available filtering technology adequately addresses the needs of schools, to evaluate local AUPs, and to make recommendations (Legal Counsel for the ALA, 2001, retrieved July 6, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/cipa/Summary.PDF>).

The CIPA and NCIPA were passed shortly after the COPA Commission issued its report, which did not endorse government-imposed mandatory use of Internet filters in their current forms. In its recommendations, the COPA Commission listed several conclusions about the most effective means of protecting children online.

After consideration of the record, the Commission concludes that the most effective current means of protecting children from content on the Internet harmful to minors include: aggressive efforts toward public education, consumer empowerment, increased resources for enforcement of existing laws, and greater use of existing technologies. Witness after witness testified that protection of children online requires

more education, more technologies, heightened public awareness of existing technologies and better enforcement of existing laws. (COPA Commission, 2000, retrieved July 3, 2001, from <http://www.copa.commission.org/report/recommendations.shtml>)

### School Libraries

The school library media program plays an important function in promoting intellectual freedom by serving as the primary point of access to information and ideas for students and staff. In their Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, the American Library Association Council more fully explained this role by writing, "School library media professionals assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry" (2000, retrieved July 3, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/librarymedia/program.pdf>).

Libraries provide access to the information people need or want, in whatever format the information appears. The Internet is one medium through which libraries meet this goal. Recent figures show that about 95% of all school libraries now provide Internet access (ALA, Libraries & the Internet Toolkit, 2001, retrieved July 3, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/internettoolkit.html>).

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) is a division of the ALA whose mission is "to advocate excellence, facilitate change, and develop leaders in the school library media field" (AASL, Mission and Goals, retrieved July 5, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/aasl/mission.html>). AASL's goals support the concept of intellectual freedom through statements that learners need to be connected with ideas and information, and that students

need to be prepared for lifelong learning, informed decision-making, a love of reading, and the use of information technologies (AASL, Mission and Goals, retrieved July 3, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/aasl/mission.html>).

Internet filters are software tools designed to restrict access to inappropriate Internet sites. The majority of filters use keyword blocking, some try to completely block certain sites, and some use a combination of these and other features. In the keyword blocking approach, sites that contain words from a pre-defined word list of supposedly objectionable terms are blocked.

Keyword blocking does not recognize multiple meanings of words, and terms blocked nearly always relate to sexuality, human biology, or sexual orientation. The use of site blocking involves both automated tools and humans evaluating Internet sites holistically and placing them into access or denial lists, often organized into categories. The practice of site blocking can allow some sites to slip by without being detected and can also inadvertently block out good content without malicious intent (Schneider, 1997, pp. 3-8). The most restrictive type of filtering allows only pre-selected sites to be accessed (Simpson, 2000, p. 49).

One imperfection of filtering was demonstrated in Iowa when Mohr (2001), using a filtered school computer, was blocked from accessing an online graduate exam because part of the title 'Dr. Pappas **Exam**' included the letters 's-e-x' (personal communication). A major shortcoming for all methods of filtering, however, is the relative lack of objectivity on the part of the site selectors. Just by the very nature of filtering, those who make filtering decisions often tend to be more restrictive, rather than less. Some would say that blocking lists are more likely to reflect political agendas than protect students from pornography. No matter how objective they believe they are being, no two

people or groups of people have the same idea of what exactly should be filtered, regardless of each's opinion of filters (Simpson, 2000, p. 49).

As a recently-trained librarian and as a member of ALA and AASL, the researcher strongly supports the beliefs about intellectual freedom that those organizations advocate. She cares deeply about the rights of children and others to access needed information on the Internet, and she feels that Internet filters block useful information. As a result of her training and personal convictions, the researcher wants to do all that she can to share her personal story of how filtering impacts her library users and her school district.

### Problem Statement

An Internet filter was imposed on public schools and their library media programs in the Waterloo Community School District in Waterloo, Iowa.

### Purpose

The purpose of this research paper is to describe one Waterloo elementary school librarian's experiences in dealing with a District-imposed Internet filter.

### Research Questions

This paper will address the following research questions related to this research:

1. Why did the Waterloo Schools administration feel the necessity for an Internet filter?
2. What filter did the Waterloo Schools choose, and why did they choose that filter?
3. How does this particular filter work?
4. What are the cognitive and affective results on the learning experiences of children from using this filter?

5. What are the alternatives to using a filter in the Waterloo Community School District?

### Definitions

**AASL (American Association School Librarians)**--a division of the American Library Association that pertains to school librarians (ALA, retrieved July 5, from <http://www.ala.org/aasl/>)

**Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)**--a binding document signed by all users that explains the rules of Internet use at an institution (Classroom Connect, 1997, p. 283)

**ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union)**--a large, active national group whose mission is to defend the rights of every U. S. citizen in court, upholding the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights (ACLU, retrieved July 21, 2001, from <http://www.aclu.org/index.html>)

**ALA (American Library Association)**--a national level professional organization that provides guidance for libraries (ALA, retrieved July 21, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/>)

**America Online Parental Controls**--filtering controls on America Online that allow parents to limit access to some features of AOL and the Internet (America Online, retrieved July 26, 2001, from <http://www.aol.com/info/parentcontrol.html>)

**Bess**--a leading brand of Internet filtering technology in schools, serving over 14 million students in the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK (N2H2, retrieved August 3, 2001, from <http://www.n2h2.com/solutions/school/index.html>)

**browser**--software that allows users to access and navigate the World Wide Web (Classroom Connect, 1997, p. 283)

**catalog**--to classify an information source descriptively (Merriam-Webster Online, retrieved August 8, 2001, from <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>)

**CDA (Communication Decency Act)** --part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, this was an attempt to regulate the content of the Internet, but was later struck down by the Supreme Court (Friedman, 2000, p. 8)

**censorship**--the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons find objectionable or dangerous (ALA, retrieved July 21, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/intellectualfreedomandcensorship.html>)

**CIPA (Child Internet Protection Act)**--legislation which mandates that libraries and schools install and use filtering software on public Internet computers as a prerequisite for receiving certain federal funds (ALA, retrieved July 5, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/cipa/>)

**content manager**--an organized list of sites appropriate for a given group of Internet users (Maxwell, 2001, p. 28)

**COPA Commission (Child Online Protection Act Commission)**--a congressionally appointed panel assigned to identify methods to help reduce access to inappropriate Internet material for minors (Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee, retrieved July 21, 2001, from <http://www.copacommission.org/>)

**COPPA (Child Online Privacy Protection Act, also known as COPA)**--law passed on October 5, 1998, to prohibit the sale of pornographic materials on the Web to minors (Lindroth, 2000, p. 18)

**Cyber Patrol**--Filtering software sold by SurfControl for home, business, or school(SurfControl, retrieved July 26, 2001, from <http://www.cyberpatrol.com/>)

**Cyber Snoop**--Internet filtering software that allows management of access privileges for each user (Pearl Software, retrieved July 26, 2001, from <http://www.pearlsw.com/cs/single.html>)

**Cybersitter 2000**--Internet filtering software for non-Macintosh computers (Solid Oak Software, retrieved July 26, 2001, from <http://www.cybersitter.com/cybinfo.htm>)

**cyberspace**--a term coined to describe the world of computers and the society that gathers around them (Kehoe, 1997, p. 195)

**email**--allows users to send and receive messages to each other over the Internet (Classroom Connect, 1997, p. 284)

**E-rate**--another name for the Universal Service discount program, which helps fund technology in libraries and schools by discounting the price of Internet wiring and hardware, based on the recipients' demographic data (ALA, retrieved July 21, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/cipa/>)

**filter**--hardware or software that is designed to restrict a person's access to certain areas on the Internet (Classroom Connect, 1997, p. 284)

**hits**--Internet sites found to match a keyword search (Kehoe, 1997, p. 196)



**hardware**--the machinery and equipment part of a computer system (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved July 23, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**host computer**--A computer connected to a network, that provides data and services to other computers (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved July 5, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**HTML (HyperText Markup Language)**-- the language used to create World Wide Web pages (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved August 7, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**indexer**--a person who systematically classifies information by specific topic (Schrader, retrieved July 9, 2001, from [http://www.ualberta.ca/~aschrade/nl\\_cen2.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/~aschrade/nl_cen2.htm))

**indexing**--the systematic classifying of contents of information sources by specific topic, used by Internet filters (Schrader, retrieved July 9, 2001, from [http://www.ualberta.ca/~aschrade/nl\\_cen2.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/~aschrade/nl_cen2.htm))

**information literacy**--the ability to find and use information (ALA, 1998, p. 1)

**intellectual freedom**--the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction (ALA, retrieved July 21, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/intellectualfreedomandcensorship.html>)

**Internet**--a worldwide information highway comprised of thousands of interconnected computer networks (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved July 23, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**Internet Guard Dog**--Internet filtering software that says it safeguards Internet users from privacy, security and virus threats, along with providing parental controls for managing objectionable material online (McAfee, retrieved July 26, 2001, from <http://www.mcafee-at-home.com/products/internetguarddog/default.asp>)

**IP address**--a unique string of numbers that identifies an individual computer on the Internet (CNET.com Glossary, retrieved November 3, 2001, from <http://www.cnet.com/Resources/Info/Glossary/Terms/ipaddress.html>)

**keyword**--a word used in a search to find World Wide Web documents relating to a particular subject (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved July 23, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**llstserv**--an automated email discussion list (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved August 7, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**microethnography**--a form of research that focuses on a particular scene within a key institutional setting (Flanigan, 2001, p. 50)

**N2H2**--Internet filtering software company that produces the Bess brand of Internet filtering (N2H2, retrieved August 3, 2001, from <http://www.n2h2.com/solutions/school/index.html>)

**NCIPA**--Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act which mandates the adoption of a prescriptive Internet safety policy that undermines local control for recipients of E-rate discounts (ALA, retrieved July 5, 2001, from <http://www.ala.org/cipa/>)

**Net Nanny**--Internet filtering software that says it includes a flexible and comprehensive set of options in choosing settings (Net Nanny software, retrieved July 26, 2001, from [http://www.netnanny.com/home/net\\_nanny\\_4/product\\_description.asp](http://www.netnanny.com/home/net_nanny_4/product_description.asp))

**netiquette**--the rules of etiquette on the Internet (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved July 23, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**network**--a group of interconnected computers, including the hardware and software used to connect them (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved July 23, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**Norton Internet Security 2001**--Internet filtering software that claims to be essential Internet protection from viruses, hackers, and privacy threats (Symantec, retrieved July 26, 2001, from [http://www.symantec.com/sabu/nis/nis\\_pe/](http://www.symantec.com/sabu/nis/nis_pe/))

**online**--connected to the Internet (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved August 7, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**outgoing data blocker**--an alternative to filtering that involves blocking certain information from going out onto the Internet, such as personal information (Maxwell, 2001, p. 30)

**PICS (Platform for Internet Content Selection)**--a rating system for Internet content that is embedded, or included, in the programming language of a website (Wagner, 1999, p. 758)

**privacy screen**--a device used to shield a computer screen so that others may not see what is being viewed (Maxwell, 2001, p. 15)

**proxy server**--a separate computer system that regulates the access of web pages on a network by saving in its memory large numbers of frequently-accessed Internet documents, thereby speeding up access to the Internet for the connected network of computers (Patron Controlled Internet Filtering, retrieved July 24, 2001, from <http://www.dayton.lib.oh.us/~kambitsch/bypass/bypass.html>)

**randomization**--method of choosing samples at random (Hunter, 2000, p. 7)

**RSACI**--a popular system for rating the content of Internet websites, which stands for Recreational Software Advisory Council's Internet rating system (Hunter, 2000, p. 5)

**search engine**--a program on the Internet that allows users to search for files and information (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved August 7, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**server**--a computer that shares its resources, such as printers and files, with other computers on the network (Kehoe, 1997, p. 199)

**site (short for 'website')**--a set of interconnected webpages organized on a home page with a collection of information by a person, group, or organization (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, retrieved August 3, 2001, from <http://www.bartleby.com/61/>)

**site blocking**--in Internet filtering, the practice of completely blocking access to certain websites based on specialized criteria (Schneider, 1997, p. 8)

**smart card system**--a system using pre-programmed swipable cards at each Internet station that tells the computer what level of filtering, if any, the user is to have (Maxwell, 2001, p. 25)

**software**--the computer program that tells a computer's hardware what to do (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved July 23, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**SurfWatch**--an Internet filtering product product by the SurfControl filtering company (SurfControl, retrieved August 2, 2001, from [http://www.surfcontrol.com/support/surfwatch/filtering\\_facts/how\\_we\\_filter.html](http://www.surfcontrol.com/support/surfwatch/filtering_facts/how_we_filter.html))

**URL (Uniform Resource Locator)**--an Internet address which tells a browser where to find an Internet resource (High Tech Dictionary, retrieved July 23, 2001, from <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/>)

**user monitor**--an alternative to filtering that uses the method of monitoring and recording the websites that users have accessed (Maxwell, 2001, p. 37).

**website**--see "**site**"

**whitelist**--an exclusive list of approved sites that are allowed to be accessed online by a filter (Maxwell, 2001, p. 28)

**World Wide Web (WWW or "web")**--a spider web-like interconnection of millions of pieces of information located on computers around the world (Classroom Connect, 1997, p. 290)

**X-Stop**--an Internet filtering product that is produced by 8e6 Technologies, an Orange, California-based private company (8e6 Technologies, retrieved November 3, 2001, from <http://www.8e6technologies.com/about/index.html>)

### Assumptions

Under the United States Constitution, everyone has rights, including children. The central administration of the Waterloo Community School District believes that by installing an Internet filter on the District network, they are both protecting students from inappropriate websites and fulfilling an obligation to the public. Filtering software programs have serious limitations. The general public is not knowledgeable about the limitations of Internet filters or about how they work. Older students need greater access to Internet websites just by the nature of their more mature research topics. Students and staff learn responsibility on the Internet best by being properly educated about how to use the Internet safely and effectively.

### Limitations

This paper is based on one librarian's experiences in one situation, and results and conclusions cannot be generalized.

## Significance

Research in this area is significant because recent legislation has been passed to require schools and public libraries to filter all Internet access computers if they are to continue to receive certain federal technology funds. According to the CIPA and NCIPA guidelines, however, libraries and schools are ultimately not required to have filters operational until July 1, 2002. Until then school districts must certify that they are working to comply with the law by studying filtering technology and writing and approving AUPs. The Waterloo Community School District could postpone installing a filter until the deadline of July 1, 2002, or until the courts decide otherwise. School officials everywhere must recognize that this issue impacts all school libraries, student learning, and personal freedom to access information. A direct correlation exists between this censorship issue and the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. It will ultimately require yet another decision by the United States Supreme Court to determine the outcome of this current legislation.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Related Research

This research paper describes one Waterloo elementary school librarian's experiences in dealing with a District-imposed Internet filter. To adequately pursue the topic of Internet filtering, related research must be summarized to discuss different themes involved in this topic. The research reviewed for this issue of Internet filtering falls into these four categories: effectiveness of filters, legal and legislative aspects, alternatives to filters, and librarian attitudes.

#### Effectiveness of Filters

Perhaps the largest amount of research is related to this category. Schrader (1998) sought to describe and critique the emerging technology of indexing content on the Internet for Internet filtering products (p. 3). By studying indexing and its roles in identifying, describing, regulating, and prohibiting Internet content, he revealed that there was a low rate of indexing consistency with Internet filtering. After examining results of indexing, Schrader wrote that a great deal of variation existed in levels of agreement among indexers in general, ranging from 4 to 82 percent consistency (p. 7). In light of these inconsistent patterns in indexing, he concluded that Internet filtering could not possibly be effective. Schrader wrote, "What the principles of indexing and retrieval tell us is that Internet filtering and rating technologies are theoretically unworkable, that the essential ambiguities of language, reading, and subject representation ensure the failure of automated searching for objectionable content" (p. 10).

Testing the effectiveness of four selected filters was the purpose of a study conducted by Hunter (2000). Combining the use of the social science method of randomization with the RSACi content analysis system, he tested the effectiveness of the filtering products CYBERSitter, Cyber Patrol, Net Nanny, and SurfWatch on 200 websites that were representative of average Internet usage. Combining the data for all four filters, Hunter found that the filters failed to block objectionable content an average of 25 percent of the time, and that they improperly blocked 21 percent of benign content (p. 13). Effectiveness ranged from blocking objectionable material 17 percent (Net Nanny) to 69 percent (CYBERSitter) in the samples, and from overblocking acceptable sites 3 percent (Net Nanny) to 15 percent (CYBERSitter) of the time. Hunter concluded that Internet filters are not effective technology for protecting children from objectionable Internet content, and he recommended, "Given these problematic results, parents and legislators should rethink their current support for the use of Internet filtering technology" (p. 16).

Consumer Reports magazine conducted two studies to find out how well Internet blocking software worked, one in 1997, and the other as a more comprehensive follow-up in 2001. The 1997 limited study sought to find out how easily and effectively four Internet filters kept testers from viewing 22 easy-to-find websites that were judged inappropriate for young children to view. The filters tested were Cyber Patrol, Cybersitter, Net Nanny, and SurfWatch, and they were all set to their maximum protection levels. None of the filters were found to be totally effective; SurfWatch allowed 18 percent of the objectionable sites through, Cyber Patrol let 27 percent through, Cybersitter let 36 percent through, and Net Nanny allowed all 100 percent through! At that time, Consumer Reports concluded that filters weren't reliable to block enough

inappropriate sites for children, and that it was best to combine monitoring children's Internet use with teaching them safety habits for Internet use (p. 30).

During the second, more comprehensive study conducted by Consumer Reports (2001), seven filters were tested and rated to see if "the present generation of filtering software [was] any better than its predecessors" (p.20), and they were also tested to see how well they blocked objectionable Internet content. This time the filtering products used were: America Online Parental Controls, Cyber Patrol, Cybersitter 2000, Cyber Snoop, Internet Guard Dog, Net Nanny, and Norton Internet Security 2001. All were configured for usage by 13-15-year-olds and were tested for access to 139 websites containing either sexually explicit content, violently graphic images, drug or crime promotion, or serious content on controversial subjects. Results varied widely, with America Online Parental Controls only allowing one percent of inappropriate sites through, while the same filter overblocked controversial subjects 63 percent of the time. Drawbacks of filters were found to include the overblocking of sites because of keyword blocking, the partial blocking of words but not graphics on a page, and the almost limitless number of sites to be viewed if using human analysis (p. 21). Conclusions of this study stated that filtering software was no substitute for parental supervision (p. 22).

The previously discussed research studies were focused on testing the effectiveness of filters; the next study discussed was originally designed to study policies and practices in United Kingdom (UK) public libraries, but the major finding was concern with the effectiveness of filtering software and the blocking of legitimate sites (Willson & Oulton, 2000, p. 5). As part of a grant-supported study into privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, a questionnaire survey was sent to 201 UK public libraries in England, Scotland, and Wales in late 1999.



Surveys were returned from 41 percent, with 60 percent of respondents revealing that they used filtering software on public-access computers and 36 percent had controls on staff computers (p. 5). This issue of controls on staff computers raised strong feelings among librarians, and it generated double the number of comments as those about the provision for public-access filtering. Interestingly, it was concluded that access to potentially objectionable material, and objections to filtering and blocking software were of significantly greater concern to respondents in the survey than the main issues being investigated, namely privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality in providing Internet service (p.8).

#### Legal and Legislative Aspects

Several issues are related to legislation about filtering, the first of which ties the use of E-Rate monies with mandatory filtering of school and public libraries. A study conducted by the Benton Foundation (2000) assessed the impact of the E-Rate on four large, urban school Districts. Researchers interviewed administrators, technology coordinators, and teachers in the Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Milwaukee school Districts, focusing on the E-Rate planning process, application process, relationship within schools and Districts, and impact of the E-Rate. By designing the E-Rate so that it would provide the greatest benefit to the poorest communities, Congress helped level the playing field in our society in which rapidly changing technology only emphasizes economic inequalities (p. 5). The researchers in this study found that the E-Rate was working as designed, leading to dramatic improvements in network infrastructure and Internet access at schools in the studied Districts. Other common themes emerged in the findings including the enabling of school funds to be spent in other areas, the increased need for professional

development, the frequent requirements to upgrade electricity and to purchase hardware in order to deploy the newly-funded information technology, and the high degree of dependence of school Districts on the E-Rate monies (p. 16). The report concludes that, as a whole, the E-Rate is making a real difference in urban schools (p. 2). If E-Rate funding were to be eliminated, it would mean pulling computers out of classrooms (p. 13), and that is exactly what would happen as a consequence of not using Internet filtering products in schools and libraries, which is a requirement of the CIPA law.

Another issue related to filtering and legal matters concerns the actual wording of laws impacting student learning in schools and libraries. The CIPA states that a technology protection measure must block or filter Internet access to depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors (American Library Association, CIPA & NCIPA Legislation, p. 1). Disagreement abounds on what exactly is obscene, or child pornography, or harmful to minors. Heins (2001) conducted a meta study on just that topic, based on the research of sixteen noted researchers and educators. He found that the idea of presumed harm to minors from pornography and other inappropriate content lacked scientific evidence, saying, "Experts in human sexuality agree that there is no body of scientific evidence establishing that minors are harmed by reading or viewing pornography" (p.3). In fact, Heins explained the difficulties identifying pornography and other inappropriate Internet content by writing the following statement:

Part of the problem in identifying harm to minors is that "pornography" has no fixed meaning. Whatever it connotes for different individuals, pornography is not a legal term like constitutionally unprotected

obscenity, and it may have serious artistic, political, or literary value.

(p.11)

He concluded that it is not easy to predict what entertainment, literature, or Internet sites will distress children, but that the real harm at issue is a matter of morality and ideology, not science. Heins further deduced that the morality of youth would be better addressed by education than by filtering technologies (p. 14). He listed several workable alternatives to filtering that included using and enforcing AUPs, the teaching of critical thinking and other media literacy skills, and the use of comprehensive sexuality education, which has been shown to foster more responsible sexual behavior and to delay sexual activity (p 17).

#### Alternatives to Filtering

Besides the Heins study, several others have pointed out viable alternatives to filtering Internet content. One of these is based on a statistical analysis of patron use of Internet filter override options. Kambitsch (1998) reported that the analysis was carried out to determine how often patrons at workstations in the Dayton & Montgomery County public libraries were blocked from Internet sites, and how often they chose to override the filter to access blocked sites. The study was conducted on 70 Internet workstations during the 51-day period between June 12 and August 11, 1998, excluding Sundays and holidays. All workstations were configured using N2H2's Bess filter without keyword blocking, and when a filtered site was encountered patrons had the option to bypass the filter if they were 18 or over, or if they had prior parental permission. It was found that patron Internet requests were blocked an average of .89 percent of the time (p. 14), with an average of 53 percent of workstations reaching at least one blocked site daily. Each day, an average of 250 sites

were blocked by the filter, but only 35 patrons chose the bypass option screen. Of those, 20 submitted the forms to invoke the overriding of the filter, and an average of 12 patrons successfully bypassed the filter daily (p. 15). Kambitsch concluded that an effective alternative to strict filtering could indeed be provided to adult patrons and to those younger with parental permission, even within the parameters of using a filter. By configuring a filter appropriately, setting up the proxy server effectively, and virtually allowing all patrons the option to override blocked sites, filtering can be useful but not stifling, all with a minimum of problems (p. 5).

One of the most comprehensive reports on the alternatives to filtering was a research study conducted in 2001 by Maxwell. The purpose of her extensive research was to present an objective overview of the technologies and methods available as alternatives to filters (p. 2). Published as one entire volume of Library Technology Reports, Maxwell discussed related legislation, listed and annotated websites that offer information on filtering options and products, and discussed the basic problems of filters, including the overbreadth of blocking, cost and time factors required, feasibility, the subjectivity and bias of blocking decisions, and the ineffectiveness of filters in general (pp. 12-13). Her findings included a long list of alternatives to filters with advantages and disadvantages discussed, along with prices and sources of availability, reports on actual usage, and a list of future improvements needed of each alternative. She discussed these alternatives to filtering: privacy screens, computer positioning, AUPs, public education [the number one recommendation of the COPA Commission], parental consent forms, smart card systems, whitelists and content managers, outgoing data blockers, location and time limiting devices, 'tap-on-the-shoulder' policy, law enforcement and prosecution of illegal content,

and user monitors (pp 15-34). The use of website rating systems, such as the PICS and RASCI systems, could be excellent alternatives to filtering use, but would need to be adopted and used by all web publishers, which they are not (p. 13). Maxwell concluded, "Despite our desire for an easily, technological silver bullet...there is no such thing" (p. 14). However, she did predict that technology solutions to the problem of controlling appropriate access might either include a restructuring of the Internet architecture or a "much-improved, super-sophisticated filtering device" (p. 40).

Although Maxwell's research pointed to mostly non-technological alternatives to filtering, Flanigan (2001) found a solution to filtering that is entirely technology-based. Her study attempted to see if high school students would make more effective use of time when searching for Internet resources if the school electronic catalog displayed both traditional and Internet resources (p. 23). Using the school's electronic catalog, she linked appropriate website URLs to subjects in the catalog that a class of 11th and 12th grade students were researching at Cedar Falls High in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Without the use of a filter, Flanigan linked students' searching for online resources to their school's electronic catalog. Flanigan's qualitative research took the form of a microethnography, with her focus on observing, videotaping, audiotaping, interviewing, taking field notes, and keeping an observational checklist (p. 55). She also interviewed a teacher and two librarians involved in the project at the school. Flanigan found that this new format of cataloging selected websites to subjects on the school's electronic catalog, just as librarians have selected and cataloged materials in other formats, enabled participants to find Internet resources in much less time than in traditional searching with search engines (p.1).

### Librarian Attitudes

As the Internet has become a way of life for librarians, so has the controversy about how to regulate it has also been a major issue for that group. Two studies that have concerned the attitudes of librarians towards filtering are discussed here. The first was conducted by Grubb & Bond (1999) to survey Tennessee public librarians about their attitudes toward the Internet and the use of filtering (p. 2). Grubb and Bond specifically set out to discover how aware Tennessee public librarians were of the issues surrounding filtering, and what their attitudes were regarding filtering. The survey was sent by way of three email listservs, and 46 institutions were represented in the findings, representing approximately 15 percent of public libraries in the state (p. 3). The majority of responses came from library administrators (p. 2). It was found that a majority of responding librarians did not feel well-informed about the issue of filtering, but half of them consider filtering a viable option, even though an overwhelming majority work in libraries that do not filter (pp. 3-4). Sixty-seven percent of respondents did not believe children should be given unsupervised access to the Internet without filtering, but the strongest agreement of respondents concerned mandated filtering. Eighty-two percent strongly believed that no library should have to accept Internet filtering as a condition to receive public or private funds (p. 4). The authors concluded that it was a significant finding that there seemed to be “a dichotomy between the librarians’ more liberal opinions regarding filtering, and their practice, especially with children, which is much more conservative” (p. 4). That tension was the core finding of Grubb & Bond’s pilot study, and they concluded that anti-censorship is an ideal that is upheld in the profession but “tempered by realism in practice” (p. 5).

Besides seeking to determine the levels of user satisfaction with filtering, Curry & Haycock (2001) conducted a study to measure the penetration of Internet filtering software, and to find which brands are being used most widely. Their survey questionnaire was mailed in April of 2000 to a randomly selected sample of 3000 School Library Journal subscribers, 2000 of which were school librarians, and 1000 of which were public librarians. Their response rate of 24 percent was low, but they did receive responses from 465 school librarians and 266 public librarians (p. 45). Findings revealed that school libraries filter much more than public libraries; 53 percent of responding school librarians have filters, while 21 percent of responding public librarians said their libraries have filters. Thirty-six percent of school libraries had no plans to filter in the future, compared to 69 percent of public libraries. The N2H2 filtering product Bess was used most in school libraries, by 36 percent of filtering respondents, with SurfWatch being used by 11 percent of those filtering. Cyber Patrol was used by 43 percent of public libraries who filter, followed by the use of SurfWatch, at 8 percent. The survey revealed that a significant percentage of staff in all types of libraries understood little about how their filtering software worked (p. 45). Satisfaction levels with different aspects of the use of filters varied; roughly 80 percent of all respondents were satisfied with the blocking of inappropriate sites, 43 percent were dissatisfied with overblocking, and 43 percent were dissatisfied with the level of flexibility to modify lists of blocked sites. Overall, 76 percent of all respondents were satisfied with the decision to install filters (p. 46). The authors concluded, "School librarians appear more frustrated than public librarians with ... filtering" (p. 47); 47 percent of school librarians were dissatisfied with their filter's ability to let good sites through, compared to 27 percent of public librarians dissatisfied with that operation of their filters. In

summary, Curry and Haycock gave these suggestions when considering a filter: Determine if the filter has an override feature, find out exactly how the filter works, and convince upper management that librarians must be involved in the decision (p. 47).

### Summary

These studies discussed different themes involved in the issue of Internet filtering. Research by Schrader (1998), Hunter (2000), and Consumer Reports (1997 and 2001) studied the effectiveness of filters, and all concluded that Internet filters are not effective because they do not block all objectionable material and block too many acceptable sites. Legal and legislative aspects were examined in two studies; the Benton Foundation (2000) found that the E-Rate funding is making a phenomenal difference in school technology programs, as designed by legislation, while Heins (2001) concluded that disagreement abounds about the legal definitions of obscene materials and pornography, as depicted in CIPA and NCIPA legislation as harmful to minors. Kambitsch (1998), Maxwell (2001), and Flanigan (2001) explored alternatives to filtering. Kambitsch concluded that a good alternative while filtering is to give all patrons the option to override the filter in their library, if desired. Maxwell presented numerous alternatives to filtering, including many nontechnical methods, including the use of public education and the use of privacy screens. Flanigan believes the method of linking preselected websites to subjects on a school's electronic catalog will solve the problem, and also will help students make better use of time in researching. Grubb & Bond (1999) and Curry & Haycock (2001) studied the attitudes of librarians towards filtering devices. Grubb & Bond found that 82 percent of Tennessee public librarians strongly believed that no library should have to accept Internet filtering as a condition to



receive public or private funds. Curry & Haycock's study found that overall, 76 percent of all respondents were satisfied with the decision to install filters, but that 47 percent of school librarians were dissatisfied with their filter's ability to let good sites through.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

In the spring of 2000, an Internet filter was installed to function as a proxy server to filter all Internet content going in and out of the Waterloo Community School District's Internet lines. The purpose of this research paper was to describe one elementary school librarian's experiences in dealing with this Internet filter imposed at the District-level in Waterloo, Iowa. The problem was addressed through descriptive research methods.

#### Research Design

In order to adequately represent the experiences of the researcher, descriptive research methodology was used. It was chosen for this study because descriptive research allows the writer to study the impact of a policy or decision over a period of time (Johnston, 2001, retrieved August 7, 2001, from <http://www.bendigo.latrobe.edu.au/mte/courses/business/bmgtxrs/week7/sld010.htm>). Major sources of information for descriptive research include records and documentation, newspaper accounts, and people who possess knowledge of the situation. Findings are normally presented in narrative form (Charles, 1995, p. 23).

This study is also an example of qualitative nonexperimental research, longitudinal in nature, as the writer studied and reported on the impact over time of a policy enacted by the Waterloo Community School District. Qualitative research explores events that cannot easily be described numerically; the information for this study was largely verbal and was collected through observation, description, and recording of incidents. Nonexperimental research is used to describe and explain events and situations as they exist or once

existed, and is much more prevalent in education than experimental research (Charles, 1995, p. 21). Longitudinal studies obtain data from the same or similar samples over time, and as a result can reveal changes in opinion or status (Charles, 1995, p. 106).

### Population

The population of this study consisted of various administrators, School Board members, District facilitators, coordinators, principals, computer technicians, teachers, and secretaries in the Waterloo Community School District of Waterloo, Iowa. Individual names were not mentioned, but individuals involved in this research included the Superintendent of Schools, the Coordinator of Instructional Media, the Executive Director of Administrative Services, the Administrative Technology Coordinator, the District's Technical Systems Facilitator, and the principal of the researcher's elementary school. The population was involved through meetings, personal conversations, email messages, memos, and other various means.

The researcher is currently a librarian at an elementary school in Waterloo, and was a part of the population for this study. Due to the researcher's recent education in the field of library media studies, she brought certain biases to this study, such as strong beliefs in First Amendment rights, intellectual freedom, and the rights of children. Although every effort was made to relate incidents as they occurred, the researcher's biases may have shaped the way the data were perceived and portrayed.

### Instrumentation

A variety of techniques were used to obtain the data for this descriptive research study. They included notation, description, analysis, and questioning. Notation was used by making periodic very brief written notes to record data in

the sequence they were observed. This facilitated easy documentation of day to day incidents relating to the researcher's observations. Description goes further than notation by attempting to convey a more detailed picture of events (Charles, 1995, p. 104). It was utilized when very detailed records of occurrences were needed, especially in making anecdotal records of conversations. Unlike all-encompassing general observation, analysis attempts to find specific information to answer specific questions (Charles, 1995, p. 105). Analysis was used in this study as objects, documents, procedures, and other behaviors were studied in depth to aid the researcher in answering the research questions. The use of questioning took place as the various subjects and informants were occasionally prompted to elicit responses.

#### Procedure

The design of this study necessitated the collection of a wide variety of data over a long period of time. The researcher gathered articles from newspapers and periodicals, videotaped and audiotaped meetings, communicated with and kept records of personal email messages with key informants, attended meetings, held conversations, conducted informal interviews, and used the Internet. The most prevalent technique to record data was journaling in notation and description to document incidents as they happened.

After data were collected, they were studied and then presented in descriptive narrative form in chronological order by month. The narrative began with events that took place in August of 1999 and continued month by month through September of 2001.

## Chapter 4

### Description of Events

The purpose of this research paper is to describe one Waterloo elementary school librarian's experiences in dealing with a District-imposed Internet filter.

#### 1999-2000 School Year

##### August 1999.

As I began my third year as librarian in my elementary school, I thought my year would go fairly smoothly, already having experienced the usual problems associated with being new to a job. Our building network was functioning well, all classrooms were connected to the Internet, our building internal email system was being used extensively, and we had recently purchased a modern library automation system. I knew I would be busier than ever in my job that year, but I felt the past two years' experience would help me. However, I was unprepared for the difficulties I would soon confront involving an Internet filter in the Waterloo Community School District (WCSD).

##### November 1999.

I first heard about our District's plans to purchase an Internet filter in early November while attending a small group District technology meeting. In an offhand comment at the end of the meeting, the District's Administrative Technology Coordinator (ATC) said he wanted to let us know that the District was planning to install an Internet filter very soon. He went on to say that the decision to filter would be discussed and resolved at a future Board meeting. I was the only librarian at the meeting, and I immediately became concerned about several issues related to filtering, including First Amendment rights,

children's rights, intellectual freedom, and other ways in which filtering might affect classroom instruction using the Internet in the District. My hand shot up as I said, "Red flag! Whoa, wait a second! This wasn't discussed with anyone! This is a big decision, and librarians need to be informed about this and take part in the decision. None of that has taken place. What's going on?" The ATC replied that the Superintendent wanted an Internet filter, and the technology department was looking into the possibility. A filtering company had offered their system to the District free of charge. I asked which filtering company it was, and he told me the filter company was N2H2, and that their filter was called Bess. That got me started on research that hasn't stopped to this day.

Immediately I began researching Bess and telling others of the District's interest in a filter. At a November 10 meeting of District librarians, I alerted my colleagues to the fact that the School District was considering installing an Internet filter. Two days later, on November 12, I again emailed all District librarians and gave them the URL for the N2H2 website, pointing out where exactly on the site they could access specific information about Bess. At that time I did not know that the School Board would be voting on the filtering issue that very next week! On Sunday, November 21, I was surprised to read in the local newspaper that the School Board would be voting on the installation of a filter the next day, November 22. The headline of the article in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier read, "School Board to look at stretching dollars" (Nick, 1999, November 21, p. C3). I couldn't believe what I was reading might become reality. The article stated that the filter service would be free, saving the District a set-up fee of \$4,000 and annual filtering fees of \$9,400 (Nick, 1999, November 21, p. C3).

I was disturbed that the local newspaper article completely focused on the cost of a filter, rather than the issues of First Amendment rights or what is best for children. The focus in education should always involve providing the best learning opportunities possible for students, not on saving the most money. After all, the mission of the Waterloo Community School District is “to provide the highest quality education, involving the entire community, which prepares each student to function successfully throughout life in an increasingly complex world” (Waterloo Community Schools, Mission Statement, retrieved October 24, 2001, from <http://206.150.144.194/wcs/open.html>). The focus should be on how filtering might affect student learning, and not about how money could be saved by using a certain filter.

As a staunch supporter of the concept of intellectual freedom, I sprang into action. I began by searching online for all the information I could get on Bess and on filters in general. I read archived messages about the Bess filter on an online worldwide library media listserv, called LM\_NET. There I read mixed opinions about Bess, with some librarians praising it, and others blatantly discrediting it. I called Dr. Barbara Safford of the University of Northern Iowa, and she, too, had been surprised to read in the newspaper about the imminent vote on the filter. Dr. Safford encouraged me to speak before the School Board the next evening about my beliefs, and she gave me suggestions about what I might say.

The next day at school, November 22, I obtained a copy of the School Board agenda booklet, which contained an exhibit concerning the filter. The exhibit’s background information conveyed that the Technology Services Department had found an Internet filtering solution that would meet the needs of the technology and financial concerns of the District, which was the Bess filter

produced by the N2H2 company. The filter would be free if the District agreed to a specially designed advertising toolbar with sponsors' advertisements to be visible on each Internet screen. Several features of Bess were touted, including that fact that Bess had the "largest database of **100% human reviewed**, educationally 'inappropriate' sites" (Board Exhibit N, November 22, 1999, p. 67). Also, it was stated in the exhibit that school districts around the country currently using the N2H2 Bess filtering system had been contacted and that all had "recommended the product with overwhelming satisfaction" (Board Exhibit N, November 22, 1999, p. 67). Accompanying brochures and literature about N2H2's Bess listed several school districts who used the product, but none were in Iowa.

In an email message sent that same day to WCSD librarians, I wrote that I was planning to attend and speak at the Board meeting that evening. I said that I would be asking the Board to wait in making their decision on the filter until District librarians and the administration could look over and discuss the plan. I stated in my message that I would point out other more effective ways of protecting children on the Internet--by having adequate supervision, by signing and enforcing Internet permission forms, by using selected websites, and by teaching students how to be responsible users of the Internet. Also expressed was the invitation to my colleagues to attend the Board meeting with me that evening, showing group support and interest in the filtering issue. By encouraging them to email me with comments or other ideas, I hoped to find out how others felt. I heard back from only one librarian, a middle school librarian. She gave me heartening words of encouragement that confirmed that I was not alone in my beliefs on the issue.



Unfortunately, it was impossible for me to speak at the School Board meeting personally because of a sudden death in the family. Instead, the supportive middle school librarian spoke at the meeting in my place, and on behalf of the librarians in the District. As a result of her comments, the Board voted 4-3 to postpone the approval of the filter until their January meeting. The fact that the vote was so close showed the general resolve of the Board at the time; several of them were leery of leaving the District's Internet computers unfiltered, especially with the offer of a 30-day, no-risk trial period (Nick, 1999, November 21, p. C3). One Board member asked, "If it doesn't cost anything and we can have a trial period, why not? It would be totally irresponsible of us not to have a filter" (Board member by Nick, 1999, November 23, p. B1).

Given this reprieve by the School Board, I started a more intensive search for information about Internet filters. One of my first tasks after the Board meeting was to post a query myself to LM\_NET, seeking specific information from my fellow librarians around the world. My message said:

I need some information about Internet filtering, especially from those of you familiar with Bess, made by a company called N2H2. Our District is pushing to install Bess at the District server level, and we media specialists... are gathering data from experienced users. We are against filtering, but may have to recommend a filtering method to the school Board nonetheless. If you have used Bess in the last year or have pertinent information about it, could you please write to me directly? Ten thousand students in our District may be affected by your information! (personal communication, November 1999)

I began receiving replies to my request immediately. In all, I received almost fifty replies, with responses split nearly half and half between those

reporting positive experiences with Bess and those reporting negative experiences. Several people reported that they were relieved to have filters, and others were very vocal in their opposition to filters in general. Many offered to continue communicating with me if I needed additional help in the future.

December 1999.

On December 2, there was a memo sent out to all librarians from the WCSD Coordinator of Instructional Media (CIM) and the supportive middle school librarian, announcing an optional informational meeting for all District librarians who wanted to discuss and to have questions answered about the proposed filter. The meeting was set for Thursday, December 9, 1999, only one week away. Agenda items for the meeting included: questions and input about how filtering works, how it would work in our District, how to educate teachers and students about safety on the Internet, a current review of the District AUP, and input for the Board exhibit for the January 10, 2001, meeting.

The day before the scheduled meeting I emailed District librarians to remind them of the meeting and to ask how many were planning to attend the meeting. I told them it was our chance to show that WCSD librarians were indeed interested and concerned about being consulted about something so important in our area of our expertise. I urged all of them to attend, regardless of their knowledge level of filters.

The meeting on December 8, 1999, was attended by the ATC, the CIM, and six out of a possible 22 District librarians: two high school librarians, one middle school librarian, and three elementary librarians, including me. I was asked to take minutes of the meeting, which I did. At the meeting I asked exactly why the WCSD was pursuing filtering. I was told that the Superintendent wanted a filter and had discussed the issue with School Board

members, and that they all wanted to get one because of the concern for liability. The ATC said he had tried Bess at home and that he thought it worked satisfactorily. I wrote in the minutes that we were all in agreement at the meeting that we need to protect students on the Internet, but that we did not agree on the best method of doing that. The ATC said there were lots of people asking for filtering in the District and that grant possibilities might be jeopardized if we did not have filtering in place. He continued to say that the WCSD AUP stated that the District would try to take care of protecting students on the Internet and that filtering would show that we were doing that. I stated that no legislation had been passed to require filtering yet, and that the Supreme Court had ruled that public libraries were required to have at least some Internet terminals unfiltered for adult patrons. That led to the concern whether our high school students would fall into the adult classification, and the CIM said that possibly the older high school students would need more complete access than younger students. The ATC talked about different features of the filter, including the fact that it would be installed at the District server level and affect everyone, that the filter could be turned off in layers for different age levels of users, and that 23 categories of information could be filtered.

Four of the librarians (including me) attending the meeting were very vocal in their concerns, expressing the belief that students and staff should be taught to be effective and evaluative users of information, but they questioned how that could happen with a filter in place. They also expressed concern over the possibility of overblocking websites, including purchased database information that comes in through school Internet lines. One high school librarian said that she wanted all students to learn to use the Internet to the best of their ability and to be able to get to any site they might need exactly when

they needed it. The middle school librarian was concerned that we would be creating an atmosphere of negativism with a filter and that students would just be inspired to figure out how to bypass the filter somehow. We also expressed concerns about the advertising bar, the possible slowing down of the network because of the filter, the administration of the filter, the need for different levels of filtering for different ages of students, and the issuing of override passwords.

After being asked more questions than he could answer, at one point the ATC appeared very frustrated and said, "I could care less if we have a filtering system. I was told to get one" (meeting, December 9, 1999). I had thought that the ATC was basically only the "messenger" in this situation, but I was surprised to hear him admit his personal lack of commitment to the topic.

One librarian asked what area school was presently using Bess, and the CIM stated that the Prairie School District in nearby Cedar Rapids was using it. The group asked if we could send a team of librarians to observe the use of Bess, possibly in the next week, and the CIM said she would contact Prairie to see if a few of us attending this current meeting could visit the next week on the afternoon of December 15. It was decided that our visiting team would be composed of the two high school librarians, the middle school librarian, and me, and we began making tentative plans to be gone the afternoon of December 15.

As the meeting ended, all eight of us agreed that the District needed to provide more staff inservice and student instruction on the use of the Internet. The CIM said she would form a syllabus to be used as a teaching outline for Internet staff development, but I have not received such a document from her. The CIM reminded us she needed recommendations for the Board exhibit from each of us so she could turn that information into the School Board secretary. Most of the librarians attending wanted to recommend only a short 45-day trial

of the filter, rather than a trial of several months, which was suggested. We also wanted to include in the Board exhibit the fact that using a filter is not the only answer in solving the problem of student access to inappropriate sites.

As we waited to hear from the CIM about our proposed visit to Prairie School District, one of the high school librarians emailed a representative from the N2H2 company and asked different questions about how the filter worked and what we could expect if we had the Bess filter on our District server. She shared the answers she got with all of the WCSD librarians. One of the important questions answered that has not been implemented in our District is the fact that the Bess filter provides for the flexibility to create and edit as many override passwords as might be needed. At about the same time, I sent an email message to the address provided by the N2H2 website, asking for my own demonstration version of Bess to try on my computer at home. I thought that if the ATC was given a trial copy that maybe I could also get one, but I never got a response to my email message. Meanwhile, we did not hear anything from the CIM for several days about our desire to visit the Prairie School District. When we finally did contact her, the CIM said that Prairie was not presently using Bess after all. The team planning to go was disappointed and did not have any other chance to see Bess in use.

#### January 2000.

A week before the scheduled January 10 Board meeting, I sent an email message to District librarians to recruit a group of us to show support for intellectual freedom by speaking at the Board meeting. I also called two Board members and discussed the filtering issue with them. They seemed unaware that there was any alternative to filtering. I shared my views with them, and they seemed genuinely interested.

This time additional background information was added to the Board exhibit concerning the filter. It was not the exhibit information that we had recommended to the CIM at our meeting in December. Rather, it stated that only six of a possible twenty-two librarians attended the informational meeting held in December, and it misrepresented our views by omitting our concerns but stating that "all who attended agree that students need to be protected while using the Internet" (Board Exhibit K, January 10, 2000, p. 59). I felt that it sounded like District librarians were generally apathetic, but that we agreed that students should be protected by filters. It did not mention that most of us attending the meeting were vocal opponents of filters and proponents of educating students about how to be responsible, critical users of unfiltered Internet resources.

Unfortunately, once again, there was a slim representation of librarians at the January 10 Board meeting. Four of us attended, and three of us spoke to the Board. The high school and middle school librarians spoke first and restated our concerns about teaching students and staff to be effective users of the Internet through education, and not through use of a filter. I believe the Board then realized that some of us were not in favor in the filter, but the body language and comments of the Board members led me to believe there was nothing we could say to dissuade them from approving the filter. So when it was my turn to speak, I thanked them for postponing their decision until this later date, I acknowledged their wishes to filter, but I then calmly stated my position on the issue. I quoted my correspondence with LM\_NET librarians and explained that a team of us had attempted to observe the use of Bess but were unable to find a nearby place to view it in use. In acknowledging their wishes to install a filter, I asked them to put in place some compromises. I requested that

the WCSD conduct a trial run of the filter of not more than two months, after which time a review of the effects of the filter could be assessed. The other compromise I solicited was giving the librarian in each building an override password so that the filter could be temporarily bypassed when necessary in a timely manner. I could see nods of agreement from Board members as I spoke, which encouraged me.

In the discussion later, one Board member said he knew that filtering could be construed as in direct conflict with First Amendment rights, but he said the protection of students was more important, thereby consciously choosing to override First Amendment rights. I was pleased to hear that Board members seemed receptive to my ideas of compromise because they called for a trial period of the filter and then an evaluation afterwards. Two Board members also mentioned they thought an override password for librarians seemed reasonable. One even asked to make sure that it was a part of the agreement, but then deferred to the ATC to see if that was an administrative function that would be taken care of later anyway. The ATC agreed that it was an administrative function to take care of that, but I suspected that he would make it his responsibility alone to be the administrator of the override password. The next day, an article (Exhibit B) in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier ended with my comments to the Board, "I can see the handwriting on the wall--I know you want this... I just think there's a better way" (Murphy, C., by Nick, 2000, January 11, p. B3).

Included as Appendix E, the minutes of the Board meeting state, "It was moved by Mr. H. and seconded by Mr. S. that the Board of Education approve installation of filtering hardware and software" (Waterloo Community Schools, 2000). The vote to install the filter was unanimous. I believe the Board thought

an Internet filter would protect students online and that they jumped at the chance to have the Bess filter because it was offered at no cost. I do not think the Board members knew just how unreliable filters are. I think that in good conscience they believed librarians and other technology employees would be given an override password and that the password issue would not become a problem as it has become for some of us.

Later in January I emailed the District librarians again. This time I reminded them that once the filter was installed, we should document its effects so we could report back to the Board a few months later, as was requested by the Board. I also commented that I wondered how long it would be before one of us needed the override password. Once again, I was trying to enlist the help of my fellow librarians to give input on what was happening with the filter situation, but I was becoming discouraged by the small number of my colleagues who were sharing opinions on the issue, one way or the other. Because our District no longer had (and still does not have) an administrative library media coordinator, I had taken over the role of unofficial leader, purely because I was becoming the most vocal about this issue. I did receive an email response from the supportive middle school librarian who had spoken at the Board meeting with me, and we both had the same discouraging feeling that we would never be given the override password at all.

#### March 2000.

Things were quiet in the WCSD concerning the filter issue until March 8, three days before Spring Break, when an icon of a dog called Bess and an advertisement bar both appeared at the bottom of each Internet screen. This was after District Internet connections had been interrupted for more than a day, obviously to install the filter. I emailed my building staff, explaining that our



Internet connection was working again, and also alerting them to the dog icon and advertising bar on each screen. Before the day was out, I heard from several teachers in my building that their yahoo email accounts were not working. I told them it was probably because of the filter, and I encouraged them to call the ATC to complain about it. After a deluge of calls from around the District, the ATC changed the filter settings to unblock free email sites.

The very next day I received an email message sent to all librarians from a District secretary, who relayed the fact that she could not access the Baker & Taylor book company site to order books online. She had called the ATC, who immediately unblocked it. She also noticed the Barnes and Noble and Amazon.com sites were also blocked. Her last comment in the message was the most disheartening to me because she wrote, "I understand that they are not going to give out the override password" (personal communication, March 9, 2000).

About this time I received my copy of "Off the Shelf," the Friends of the (Public) Library newsletter (French-Johnson, March/April 2000). In it was an article written by the Director of the Waterloo Public Library, who addressed the issue of Internet filtering by writing that the public library had chosen not to install a filter on patron computers with Internet access. She gave the reasons that most filtering software blocks too much and does not block all of what it is designed to block. Her ending statements were: "We stress to all parents, grandparents, and Waterloo citizens that all children should be taught how to safely navigate the Web and should be supervised when using the Internet. Filters can't replace parental involvement and supervision" ( p.3).

After Spring Break, I was determined to use the Internet extensively to get a good feel for how the filter worked. I was immediately dismayed to see that

not only did the advertising bar continuously show at the bottom of our computer screens, but it also printed out automatically. It did not take long for me to have access blocked to a site I had previously used often. Instead of going to the Lycos Multimedia Search website I had sought, a screen appeared with the Bess dog and a message saying, "The web site you have requested cannot be accessed. You can... enter a different URL, search the Internet, or explore the features in Searchopolis" (Bess Can't Go There, retrieved March 19, 2000, from <http://www.multimedia.lycos.com/>). The screen also gave the option buttons of "Request Review," "Authorized Override," and "View Filtering Policy" (Bess Can't Go There, retrieved March 19, 2000, from <http://www.multimedia.lycos.com/>). The Bess dog and the advertising bar both appeared on the print out denying access to the requested site (See Appendix F). I felt very annoyed because this was a site from which I needed to retrieve some pictures for a teacher. Trying to follow protocol, I chose the "request review" button and filled out an online form saying that I frequently used that site and requested it to be put on the unblocked list. I momentarily received an automatically-generated email reply from the N2H2 company thanking me for my review request and saying they would get back to me on my request. It was almost a week before I received another reply saying that the Lycos website was not acceptable according to the settings on our filter. That was only the beginning of my experiences being blocked by our filter.

It wasn't long before others in my building started experiencing blockages by Bess. As a result of my message to staff members to alert me to any filtering problems they encountered, a fifth grade teacher informed me that her students were having problems accessing websites for their Women's History research projects. The sites blocked included a site about Oprah

Winfrey and sites where a student was blocked from searching for a picture of Madonna at two different websites. I tested the sites at home that night, however, and did discover that the Oprah site itself appeared harmless, but had another screen pop up concerning gambling. The sites searched for pictures of Madonna both included nude photographs of women, so those websites were blocked as intended by the filter. One very useful site was blocked from student use during another research project, however. The blocked site was the Michael Jordan's Official Website. I submitted a request to N2H2 to open that site and waited patiently to receive a response from them.

Near the end of March, I emailed District librarians again, asking if anyone had encountered blocked sites, and whether anyone had asked for and/or received the override password. In my message to them, I remarked that I was glad to see the filter did not seem to be slowing down the speed of the Internet, but that I had been denied access to sites and had submitted the site addresses for review by the filtering company.

#### April 2000.

More sites were being blocked all the time. A different fifth grade class was researching, and the first site blocked was a website about the popular Mary-Kate & Ashley Olsen twins. The student brought me the website address, and I tried to access it on my computer. Both the student and I were disappointed because we were unable to access the site. The student said she was frustrated and asked me why we were not allowed to use that site, and all I could say was that the filter somehow thought it was an inappropriate site for students. I submitted the site for review and unblocking on April 4 to N2H2, but did not get a reply for ten days, at which time they did tell me they would unblock the site. This was after the research project was already completed by

the student. When the Mary-Kate & Ashley site was first blocked, I decided that the filter had begun to interfere with student learning and that it was time to email the ATC to ask for the password for Bess. I wrote:

Hi (ATC),

Could I have the password to override Bess when needed? I have three classes of fifth graders doing research right now, and many of them have come up against blocked sites. So have I. I have submitted several sites to be reviewed to be unblocked, but haven't heard back on all of them yet. Most of the fifth graders are doing reports on actual people, and many of the sites on current stars have been blocked. Their topics have been approved by teachers.

I just went to a site with a student that was blocked. It would have been so easy to unblock the site right then and there while I was working with that student. I am guessing maybe the site was blocked because it offered a chatroom, but we wanted the information on the page. Can you help us out with this problem?

Thanks,

Chris Murphy

P.S. Aren't you proud of me for keeping quiet about this topic for such a long time? :- ) (Murphy, personal communication, April 4, 2000)

I received an email response from the ATC saying he would not be giving the override password out to anyone, but that I should call the District Technology Help Desk to report a site I would like unblocked. He said if it was an appropriate site, he would unblock it as soon as possible by using his override password. The ATC and the TSF are the only two people in the WCSD with the override password. The TSF is an educator, but the ATC is a non-

educator making most of the decisions about what sites would be blocked and which ones would not. The ATC also alluded to the fact that I was the only one complaining about the filter so far. That was definitely not the answer I wanted to hear, but I was not surprised.

Two days later, I tried enlisting help from District librarians once again through an email message. I explained the fact that we used the Internet a lot at my school, and that I was aware that some buildings were not yet wired for the Internet and, therefore, not feeling the effects of the filter. In my email message I acknowledged that I knew some of them were relieved to have the filter in place, and that I respected their views, but I encouraged them to purposely experiment with the filter so more of us could voice our varied opinions about this matter. I did not want to be the only librarian speaking up on the filter issue. I shared with them that the ATC had written that I was the only person to ask for the override password, and I encouraged others to call him, asking for the password if they wanted it. If we did not speak up during the trial period of the filter, I pointed out, we would never have a chance to get any changes made with the filter. I also expressed several reasons why the ATC's method of having us call into the Help Desk to get sites unblocked was unreasonable. I listed these concerns in my email message:

1. What happens if (the ATC) is gone or not available at that time?
2. What happens if we are not near a phone to call?
3. What happens if the Help Desk line is busy?
4. What happens if our building phone lines are all busy, and we can't complete the call to the Help Desk?
5. If the District enables and trusts us to select PRINT materials for our students, why won't they allow us to have the password to help

select ONLINE materials for our students? (Murphy, personal communication, April 6, 2000)

I ended my message by writing that I was feeling very discouraged and wished to hear from each of the other librarians about their thoughts on the issue.

Sadly, I heard from four out of 22 librarians.

In mid-April I attended the Iowa Educational Media Association's state convention in Council Bluffs. While there, I eagerly talked to other librarians from across the state about their experiences with Internet filtering. Most were aghast that Waterloo had forced a filter on us, especially without assigning override passwords to adults. One librarian told me that her District also had the Bess filter, but that each staff member had his own override password, and that even students could get temporary override passwords for up to two weeks in order to conduct unfiltered research at the high school level. She pointed out that their system administrators could, after all, trace who used their override passwords and for what websites, if there was any question about proper use of the passwords. While at the conference, I also attended a session about how to deal with an Internet filter. I was told a way to bypass Bess without a password, but when I tried that method back at school, it did not work for me.

Upon returning from the conference, I had a small glimmer of hope when I noticed that the filter was not on any more. My elation was short-lived, however, when Bess was back on about a week later, on April 27. While talking to a District secretary that same day the filter was reinstalled, she told me about problems she had encountered in using the filter previously. Some sites that she had used on a regular basis were blocked when the filter was first installed, including the site to schedule Iowa Communications Network (ICN) sessions. With the newest installation settings in effect on April 27, however, she found

she could now finally access those sites without being blocked. While talking to her, I was thinking how absurd it was that the District would not even give a trusted, senior secretary an override password to enable her to complete her job assignments! I felt totally disgusted and discouraged.

May 2000.

On May 1, once again there were several innocent sites that students could not access for research purposes at my school. Among those were sites about Laura Ingalls Wilder and John Deere. Students were also denied access to an Internet penpal site called ePALS. I suspected keyword blocking was enabled on Bess when I was blocked from a website for Bottomline Distribution Center, where I wanted to investigate the purchase of a digital camera for our school. After all those blocks in one day's time, I was more furious than ever about the filter. I attempted to call the Help Desk to report the blocks, but got a busy signal. When I later got through to the Help Desk, I painstakingly read the URLs for all the blocked websites to the secretary and also requested the password again for my use because of so much overblocking of appropriate sites. When an absolutely exemplary site about the Holocaust was blocked, I began to wonder if our filter was showing blatant religious bias by blocking that educational site! I decided to call the ATC directly after thinking more about the Holocaust site blocking.

I left a message on his voicemail telling him about my problems, and by the end of the day the ATC sent me a message saying that he discovered there were problems with the filter at the firewall level. He thanked me for calling my problems into the Help Desk, which evidently alerted them to the problem. The ATC also said that the override password would not have helped in that case

because the problem was with the firewall and router (personal communication, May 1, 2000).

Another site was blocked by the filter when I attempted to download the newest version of Instant Messenger for a new computer. When I tried to access the site I was blocked and shown a screen with the Bess dog telling me that I couldn't go to that site. I called the Help Desk to report the problem and to get the site unblocked. I received more than one call from the Technical Systems Facilitator (TSF), telling me he was trying his best but for some reason was having trouble unblocking the site. More than six hours later, I was finally able to access the site and download the version of Instant Messenger that I needed. If I had just had the override password myself, I might have been able to save hours of the TSF's time.

By this time I was very reluctant to continue emailing my fellow librarians about the filter because of the overwhelming lack of response on their part. I decided, however, to continue to email all of them in the hopes that I might, if nothing else, educate them about filter issues. So on May 11, I emailed my colleagues once more about evaluating the effectiveness of the filter and encouraging them again to ask for the override password if needed. Later that same day my patience with the filter came to an abrupt end, when I was blocked while searching for a book title on the Renaissance Learning site. I had used the site many times before to search for and order reading practice quizzes online for our school-wide reading program, but that time I was blocked by Bess when I searched for a test for a book entitled Cock a Doodle Dudley. I was absolutely incensed when I got the Bess dog icon with the message, "The term you used was not allowed in that search engine. You may click 'go' to run this search in Searchopolis." I printed out the blocking message, once again with



the advertisement bar appearing at the end of the page (See Appendix G). I could not see why any link to that Renaissance Learning website should be blocked at all! Just because the title had the word “cock” in it didn’t mean an inappropriate website link would be accessed! I was furious and had reached the end of my tolerance level. I went to my principal’s office and explained the denial of access to the site, and she readily agreed that it should definitely not have been blocked.

I decided to call the ATC directly about this and to demand the override password, this time hoping that he would see that it was indeed time to share the password with me for instances just like that. I was further frustrated to get his voicemail again, but decided to leave a message, a very adamant message at that. I heatedly explained the situation to his voicemail machine and demanded he give me the override password to bypass the filter. I was hoping that he would finally get tired of my requests for the password and would give in. A few minutes later I received an email message from the ATC saying:

As stated in the past, the password will not be given out to the buildings. What site are you trying to enter cockadoodle at, because off the general search screen I did not get blocked. If you would send this useful information when you call, we (would) be able to help you. Let’s try to cooperate with each other instead of these very nasty voice mail messages that I keep receiving from you. Other media specialists do not like the fact that the password is not given out, but are willing to cooperate to solve the problem. (personal communication, May 11, 2000) I replied to the ATC immediately with this email message:

The site I was using was <http://www.advlearn.com/apps1/quicksearch.asp?c=MP+90%3A3+00%2F11%2f5>. I entered Cock a

Doodle Dudley. The reason I called you directly is because this filter is interrupting our educational process again, and I firmly believe media specialists should have the password. I am sorry if I came across as “nasty” to you... I meant to be FIRM, not nasty, and I believe this is the first time I’ve been so forceful. I do believe I have cooperated in trying to solve this problem. I just feel the time is NOW to give out the password. Would you please call me about this, if I don’t reach you this afternoon? I will try to call you before I leave today. Thanks. (Murphy, personal communication, May 11, 2000)

When the ATC did call me back a few minutes later, he told me I could have gotten the information I wanted from that website if I had searched by author name instead of title. I told him it was not always known who the author was of a book title someone was searching. I apologized for coming on strongly but held to my request for the override password. The ATC told me I could call the Executive Director of Administrative Services (EDAS) to talk more about the matter of the password. I tried calling the EDAS but was cut off by a phone message saying that the office was closed.

The next day, Friday, May 12, I was surprised when my principal called me into her office right away for a private conversation. She said that she had just had a phone call from the EDAS, the boss of the ATC, who had listened to my voice message to the ATC. The EDAS, a financial employee and also a non-educator, told my principal that I’d been acting very unprofessionally and that she should speak to me about the matter. He told her that I was the vocal minority in the District concerning the filter, and that only a handful of the librarians had ever asked for the override password. He also said that four other librarians had called the ATC after our January Board presentation to say

that they were glad to have the filter, and that their views were not represented at the meeting by the librarians who spoke against the filter. I was absolutely dumbfounded and embarrassed to hear that the EDAS had gotten involved and had called my principal. To my principal's credit, she did not say that she shared the EDAS's views, but only that she was passing on to me what he had said. She told him she would deal with the issue like she dealt with all other staff-related issues, by frankly talking to me about his accusations and comments, and not by criticizing or blaming me. I was close to tears because I had never been accused by anyone, to my knowledge, of being unprofessional, and because I felt I was being penalized for standing up for what I believed. My principal and I continued discussing the situation frankly, and she reassured me that she understood my actions, but that she thought I was causing more trouble for myself than I deserved. I felt like all my attempts to become a leader and a change agent in the WCSD, as I had been encouraged to be in library media classes, were blowing up in my face.

Shortly after my discussion with the principal, I found an official Technology Department Memo in my mailbox from the ATC (See Appendix H). He had sent copies of the memo to the EDAS and to my principal. The message read:

In response to your many requests for the filter password, I am compelled to send you this memo. The District's policy is to have the Technology Department handle all the Administrative functions on the filtering software. Your repeated requests for the password will not change the policy.

If you are running into sites that are being blocked, there are procedures set up to assist you with overcoming these blocks. Within

Bess, you may select the 'Request Review' and have the staff at N2H2 review your request. If there is an emergency, you may contact the Help Desk... and receive a ticket number for service, or try to get in contact with myself. I will make every effort to respond to your request, and put in an override for an educational request.

All filter problems have been logged on the Help Desk in order to track the overall success of the filter. Since the implementation of the filter on 3/9/00, there have been 28 calls logged for the filter, with the majority of those calls coming during the first few days. Local overrides have been put into the system 6 times for educational purposes during this time period. The District has been averaging around 189,000 requests a day on the Internet, with a blockage rate of .77%.

I hope this clarifies the District's position on this matter. (personal communication, written May 11, 2000)

The memo only confirmed that I was indeed viewed as a meddling threat to the peace of the technology department, and I stewed the rest of the day. As a very conscientious person, it bothered me greatly that I had been accused of sending unprofessional email messages and of behaving unprofessionally in general. In email messages to my principal later that same day, I wrote that I had searched through all my past communications with the ATC and could not find one single instance where I thought I had acted unprofessionally. I told her that I prided myself in treating people the way I should, and that the ATC's side of the story was not entirely true. I then thanked her for listening, and told her that in the future I would try to concentrate my energies in ways other than the filtering issue (Murphy, personal

communication, May 12). Her email reply to me was exactly the reassurance I needed to hear at that time. She wrote:

Chris, I have only seen you behave in a professional manner. I used (the EDAS)'s language so you would understand the kind of conversation we had and where (the ATC) is going with this. You are one of the most professional people I know! However, I think we both need to look at the bigger picture--Is this really the 'hill we are willing to die on?' Not me... Your appropriate actions speak for themselves. Try to let this go for now and work on the many areas where you can make a positive difference. Remember, you are the best! (personal communication, May 12)

I thought all weekend about the situation, replaying the conversations and email messages over and over again in my mind. I was torn between not giving up and wanting to put the incident behind me. I knew the filter would not go away, and I also knew that I needed to try to salvage any personal credibility I had in the District, both for my school's sake and for my own sake. After much soul-searching and swallowing of pride, I drafted an apology to send to the ATC the first thing Monday morning by email. It said:

I owe you an apology for my message on your voice mail last Thursday. I was taking out my frustration over the filter on you, and I shouldn't have. My passionate commitment to a cause controlled what I said, and I'm sorry for that.

In the future, I will go through the established channel of contacting the Help Desk to submit sites to be unblocked, rather than calling you directly about them. Recently, however, I have often encountered a busy signal when calling the Help Desk. It would be most

helpful for both the secretary and me if sites could be sent via email, and therefore cut and pasted, to save time at both ends painstakingly spelling out and writing down URLs. I have already been in the habit of submitting sites to N2H2 to review.

I hope this apology will mend the fences between us, and that we can reestablish a good working relationship.

Sincerely,

Chris (Murphy, personal communication, May 15)

Hitting the 'Send' button on my email program that morning was one of the hardest things I've ever done. I did not like apologizing because I felt it looked like I was giving in to the technology department beurocracy, but I knew that apologizing was the politically professional thing to do at the moment. I sent copies of the apology to the EDAS and to my principal, so they would be abreast of developments. I also sent an email message to my principal thanking her for her support through the whole filter issue. She replied with the message, "An apology to (the ATC) supports the professional you are" (personal communication, May 15, 2000). I honestly don't think I would have sanely survived the rest of the school year without her unwavering support.

### 2000-2001 School Year

#### August 2000.

As the new school year started, I struggled with the decision of whether to attend and speak at the School Board meeting held August 28. That was the meeting when the use of the filter would be reviewed and the ATC would give a status report concerning its use. The School Board agenda booklet contained a three-page exhibit that included statistics about the average number of Internet requests a day (177,449), the percent of requests blocked (0.72), and the

breakdown of calls made to the technology Help Desk concerning the filter. A total of 29 calls had been made to the Help Desk concerning the filter, with 10 concerning free email access (solved), 9 to open sites (7 sites opened, 1 invalid, 1 user error), 5 firewall/router problems (solved), 3 requests for the password (denied), and 2 basic questions (answered). I personally had called to have sites opened 6 times and had asked for the override password once. Included in the Board exhibit were eight questions posed by librarians at the January Board meeting. The questions had written answers in the exhibit, and they appeared to be the District's way of addressing my concerns with the filter. The answer to one question about giving the override password to buildings stated, "With the small percentage (0.72) of sites being blocked and the very few calls that have been logged on the Help Desk, the statistics, along with other reasons, do not support the request" (Board Exhibit P, August 28, 2000, pp. 92-93).

With input from my principal, I swallowed my pride and decided not to attend the August 28 Board meeting at all, nor did I encourage my librarian colleagues to attend. I wanted to continue to rebuild my professional credibility in the District, and speaking at the meeting against the filter would not assist in that goal. I watched the Board meeting on television at home. The ATC presented a report about the filter, giving statistics. There was a short discussion by the Board members, with one of them stating that he was frankly surprised that there were no filter opponents at the meeting. Watching from home I felt frustrated that I was not able to comment, but I also knew that my label of 'rebel' was fading a little with my absence at the meeting. I decided I should avoid the filtering issue in future communication with my fellow librarians in Waterloo.

### September 2000.

As I began to refrain from mentioning the filter in email messages to other WCSD librarians, my peers began to communicate a bit more about it. In an email message to all District librarians, the supportive middle school librarian mentioned the lack of discussion on the filter at the August 28 Board meeting and asked, "Do only Chris, (the vocal high school librarian), and I care about this topic?" (personal communication, September 5, 2000). I also felt support from a fellow school library media studies student from another city who sent me a newspaper article about the ineffectiveness of filters in their local school system. I could get unsolicited support from a colleague one hundred miles away, but I could not get solicited support from colleagues in my own school system.

### October 2000.

If I could not be vocal about filters at the local level, I decided I would try advocacy at a different level. I went to the website of Iowa Senator Charles E. Grassley and sent him comments about how I thought Internet filters should not be mandated for schools and libraries in the proposed CIPA, which was being debated in Congress at the time. I received a letter in the mail a few days later from Senator Grassley, and he thanked me for taking the time to share my opinions with him. He informed me that the CIPA had been approved in the United States Senate and was to be "reconciled in a House-Senate conference" (Grassley, C. E. Personal communication, October 3, 2000).

### November 2000.

The vocal high school librarian was the next person to mention the filtering issue to District librarians. In an email message to all WCSD librarians, she wrote:



(The ATC) called yesterday about having a committee on the use of the filter in the District. All media specialists may attend the committee meetings. We now need to find out who would be interested in being on this committee. Day and time will be arranged after the committee is formed. The committee will have at least (the ATC) and (the TSF) on it. Please let me know... if you would like to be on this committee.

(personal communication, November 1, 2000)

I emailed her immediately, of course, and volunteered for the committee, even though I did not believe much progress would result from meeting. This was a chance, however, to voice my opinions within the parameters set by the WCSD. A few weeks later I saw the vocal high school librarian and asked how many District librarians had volunteered for the committee. Once again, I was not surprised to find that only three of us were interested in the committee, the vocal high school librarian, the supportive middle school librarian, and me.

That month I continued to have problems accessing information on the Internet at school. I was looking for a reading quiz for a certain book title on the Renaissance Learning site. I was blocked when I searched for the book title Babe: The Gallant Pig. I called the Help Desk, submitted the site to be unblocked, and was called back by the ATC, who said he had unblocked the site for me. I told him the entire Renaissance Learning site should be totally unblocked because there was absolutely no controversial material on that site that could be accessed, and he said he would try to unblock the whole site.

A few days later I was also frustrated to be blocked from the Shockwave site when I was trying to download the updated version of Shockwave. This time, I submitted a request via email to the N2H2 review team to unblock the

site. A few days later I received a reply from the N2H2 Website Review Team. They wrote that my request was denied, saying:

This site offers the ability to download games and video that meets our criteria to be tagged TASTELESS/GROSS. This can include things such as bodily functions, tasteless humor, graphic medical photos, and extreme forms of body modification. Unfortunately, the way this site is configured makes it impossible for us to separate the content effectively. It has become necessary to tag most of this site as TASTELESS/GROSS. Your server is currently configured to filter sites that fall into this category, which is why the particular section you are trying to access is unavailable. We have been able to effectively allow the portion of this site that enables you to download and update Shockwave/Flash. If you need to access this portion of this website, then please go to: <http://www.shockwave.com/download/>. This should grant you access to this portion of the website, and allow you to update/download Shockwave as necessary. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you. We do appreciate your feedback. Please let us know if you find any other sites you think may be incorrectly rated by Bess. (personal communication, November 21, 2000)

I was annoyed that the Shockwave site had been blocked, but was glad to hear from the Review Committee that I could access the downloads section of the site. It appeared to me that Bess admitted that they could not effectively block only portions of a site, but it did appear that the N2H2 Review Committee was trying to help me by giving the option of going to the downloads section, which is really where I wanted to go days before. It was unfortunate that I had

to wait all that time to be able to download shockwave to view a graphic I wanted to preview for a teacher.

April 2001.

On April 11, I had an interesting discussion about the filter with the most senior District computer technician, who maintains the District webpage in addition to repairing computers. I have known him for several years, so I asked him if he could share the filter override password with me. He laughed and said even he couldn't get the override password! As a prime example, he said he needed to download some software drivers the day before, but was unable to get them because of the filter. When asked if he knew how to get around the filter, he told me to call the Help Desk to get a site opened. I said I knew that, but asked him if that was what he had to do, and he said yes. I was incredulous! Was there absolutely NO sharing of the filter override password with ANYONE?! I had assumed that all the District technicians would be privy to the override password, but once again, the WCSD showed it trusts no one but the ATC and the TSF with the override password. Continuing my discussion with the technician, I told him that I'd like to see the District at least try giving the override password to even one librarian to use. I said I would be the logical librarian because I was reportedly the one who repeatedly asked for the override password. He agreed that I was the only visible librarian wanting it, but said he thought the only reason I wanted the override password was really because I couldn't have it. I tried to clarify my position with him, but he didn't seem receptive to my ideas. I had a scheduled class arriving in the media center, so our discussion ended there.

The next day I was blocked again trying to check for a reading quiz on the Renaissance Learning site. I was looking for a quiz for the book Nasty,

Stinky Sneakers, and I was blocked from accessing any information about that book. The blocking message said, "The term you used was not allowed in that search engine" (Bess Can't Go There, retrieved April 12, 2001, from <http://www.renlearn.com/apps1/quicksearch.asp>). I went back to the search screen and entered the author of the book, and then I was allowed access to quiz information about the book. I then deduced that sites with certain taboo key words could indeed be reached if creative thinking was used in accessing the information in roundabout ways. Just to check for further problems with the title, I went to the Library of Congress Online Catalog to see if I could enter the title there without being blocked. There I found I could access the title with no blocking by Bess. Was the Library of Congress website totally unblocked for some reason? Was the Renaissance Learning site blocked by keywords? I could not figure out how blocking by Bess was configured.

The next week I again was blocked searching for a reading quiz on the Renaissance Learning site. I was searching for the title Mrs. Katz and Tush, and this time I called the District Help Desk to report the problem. The Help Desk secretary called me back a few minutes later and said the title would not be blocked if I left out the word "Tush" and only entered in "Mrs. Katz" for the title. I told her a teacher had put in the title and did not know to try searching for only part of the title. Once again, the Bess filter proved to be ineffective in blocking key words when circuitous searching methods were used.

I told the Help Desk secretary that I'd like to talk to the ATC again about this continuous problem of having the Renaissance Learning site blocked. The secretary said the ATC would call me back, which he did. We were both very cordial to each other on the phone. He said there was nothing he could do for the most recent problem, other than taking the word "tush" off the blocked word

list. I told him if the sites were indeed “human reviewed” as their advertising claimed, the Renaissance Learning site should not be blocked in any instance. Before our conversation was over, the ATC mentioned the filter review committee that had never met. He said he had not heard back from the high school librarian who was enlisting other interested librarians, but that he would be willing to meet with us whenever it was convenient. The filter was up for review, he said, because it would not be free any longer to the WCSD. This reference to the issue of finances instead of what is best for student learning followed the line of thinking that seemed to prevail concerning the filter issue. The ATC also expressed the desire to get rid of the advertising bar if we had to pay for the filter, and I agreed that would be good. Twice during our conversation I offered to help research filters, but he did not acknowledge my comments about that.

#### May 2001.

On May 8, three librarians met for ninety minutes after school with the ATC and the CIM about the filter. The librarians included the vocal high school librarian, an elementary librarian back from maternity leave, and me. At the meeting, the librarians shared examples of difficulties with the filter, and the ATC explained more about how the filter works. He admitted that when Bess made an automatic update a few months earlier, our network was down for almost two days and that we lost our settings in the process. Because the ATC seemed very defensive at the beginning of the meeting, I tried to reinforce good actions and comments by him throughout the meeting. I made it a point to laugh at appropriate times and to keep my sense of humor throughout the meeting, while at the same time sharing my candid thoughts.

The high school librarian said that students frequently got discouraged and did not want to research on the Internet at school because they were blocked so often. She speculated that students were using the Internet at home to do research because it was unfiltered there. We agreed that many librarians in the District feel they cannot fight the filter, so they just do not say or do anything about it. The ATC said that having the filter was a Board decision, but that giving out the override password was the Superintendent's decision. He had asked the Superintendent again if the override password could go out, and his request had been denied. I thanked the ATC for asking about the override password anyway. He said that no matter what we thought, the WCSD would still have an Internet filter. Even though the ATC didn't thoroughly understand all the conditions set forth by the CIPA, he was adamant that the Board still wanted to filter, and that they would think it was worth the price to feel that students were safe and that the Board would be covered in the case of a lawsuit by a parent.

The District would soon have to pay for Bess, the ATC said, so there was a chance they might change to a different, cheaper filter. I mentioned an upcoming filter informational meeting being held at the local Area Education Agency. The ATC and the CIM didn't seem to know about the meeting or think it was important, although they were sent the same email messages with the information about the meeting as I was. I said I thought it was important that someone from our district attend the vendor presentation meeting to learn more about any new filtering products, especially if the WCSD was planning to now pay for one. I said it was important to do some research before purchasing, including reading professional journals, watching demonstrations, talking to vendors, and trying out products. I said I would feel a lot better if someone from

our District would attend the informational meeting. I offered to go myself if someone could pay for my substitute, but the ATC and the CIM both said there was no money for that. The CIM said that she thought we did not really need their filter information because we had already done our research on filtering. I countered by saying that technology is constantly improving, and that I thought we should not pass up the chance to see several vendors at one time right here in our city. The ATC admitted he was not up-to-date on filter research. After much discussion, I offered to check again on the meeting details, and the ATC said he would try to attend the meeting. I also offered to do some research on filters myself, and the other librarians said they would like to hear about what I found out.

The cost of the filter also was discussed. The ATC said it might cost between \$10,000-15,000, depending on the filter. He said that many filter companies charge by the number of computers online, which would make our bill high. The CIM said that we might have to start limiting the number of computers the WCSD actually has on the Internet to stay within the number we will pay to have filtered. I couldn't be quiet any longer as I exclaimed, "That's a SHAME! Filtering would then be limiting access to information in even more ways." I felt disgusted at the idea, but tried to calm down. The CIM soon left the meeting.

The other elementary librarian asked if there was any way we could filter less. Possibly because he was now alone with the three of us, the ATC admitted that he had not looked at the filter settings in a long time. He candidly stated that the filter was maintenance-free for him except when he got a call from one of us to unblock a site. He said a few of the settings were turned off right away when there were problems getting started, but that the rest were still

enabled. By the end of the discussion, the ATC said he would study the filter settings again.

The issue of giving out the override password came up several times. Near the end of the meeting I asked, "Does the Superintendent know how few people really want the override password? What if you give it to the three of us for awhile and see how it goes? Couldn't we have a trial run? Could you even give it to just one of us?" At this point the ATC said he had been looking at the override possibilities that very day. There were not very many options, he said, but he could assign a limited override password to us that would work on only one computer in our building, for only five or ten minutes at a time. My heart was in my throat; I couldn't believe the ATC was actually talking about cooperating in this way! He went on to say that he had already created an override password for each of us but could not give them out without the Superintendent's permission. Somewhat backing down, the ATC told us he did not think having a limited override password would be a cure for us, but I assured him it would surely help. The ATC said he personally did not really care if we had an override password; it would only mean less hassles for him because we would be calling him less. I was silently cheering inside as I realized that the ATC was actually planning to give us an override password!

As the meeting ended, we all thanked the ATC for meeting with us and for listening to our concerns. I said I would forward him the email messages about the upcoming filter informational meeting and would research filters myself. The ATC said he would look at the filter settings and get back to us about it. The meeting ended on a much more positive note than it had begun. Ultimately the ATC did attend the filter information meeting at the Area



Education Agency and, as a result, ultimately decided to change to one of those filter companies discussed at that meeting.

The very next morning I was surprised to receive a packet of information and another official Technology Department Memo from the ATC. The memo was on the same letterhead paper I'd seen before from him, but this time the message was not condemning my actions; this time it was condoning my ideas! The memo read:

After our meeting last night, I did some digging into the setup of the filter. Attached are some documents explaining what the filter categories are, our current settings, a sample of possible setting changes, and a blank filter that you can help construct. I am asking for your help with the blank filter sheet. Please fill in the categories you think we should be filtering, keeping in mind that we will filter, and please write up why you don't want certain categories filtered so that we can explore our options.

Since the three of you were the only media specialists present, you can be the test group. Between the four of us, we should be able to make some progress on the filter. If possible, keep the filter experiments between the four of us until we have some firm changes to implement.

I am going to set up an override password for each of you to use on a specific computer, so when you send the blank filter sheet back, send the IP of the computer that you will be using to override the filter. If the experiment with the password is a success, I will take the results to (the Superintendent) and recommend that all media specialists have a password. Please keep the fact that you have the password confidential, eliminating the other media specialists and administration dissatisfaction

of not being included in the test. Remember that this is a test, and our small group of four is a good number to work with.

Your quick response will allow us to try some of the changes before the school year is over. (personal communication, May 9, 2001)

Included in the packet of information was a listing of the current filter settings, a description of each filtering category, a listing of possible filtering choices, and a blank "Filter Builder" template of settings I could recommend we use. These items are included as Appendix I, Appendix J, Appendix K, and Appendix L.

Getting these forms was more than I had ever hoped for! Immediately I called the other elementary school librarian and conferred with her about what settings we should suggest. We agreed that we would have to propose blocking a few categories to appear credible to the ATC. I marked my "Filter Builder" template, composed some comments about my rationale for leaving some categories unfiltered, and returned my materials to the ATC the next day. These items are included as Appendix M and Appendix N.

On May 29, I got a call from the ATC. He told me my personal override password and explained the procedure to follow in using it. I was to clear the computer cache when blocked and then to enter my override password. Later that day I received the new filter settings in the mail from the ATC. They were identical to my recommendations, except that chat rooms would be blocked. The new filter settings are included as Appendix O.

#### June 2001.

I was hoping I would need to use my override password before school was out to demonstrate both the need for it and my responsible manner in using it. That opportunity came three days later on June 1. I was trying to place an

online order to replace a lost out-of-print book in my library, and I was directed to a pre-order service page through the Amazon.com website. When trying to open that page, I was blocked! It was a wonderful feeling to be able to clear my Internet cache, insert my override password, and immediately access that page and place my order for the book I needed. That is exactly what I did. I also immediately emailed the ATC to tell him I had already used the override password and under what conditions. I also thanked him again for assigning me an override password. That was the only time I needed to use the override password before school was out a week later.

Near the end of the month I attended the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC) in Chicago. There I made it a point to visit all of the booths of filtering software companies. I talked to and collected literature from vendors of X-Stop, EduGuard, Cyber Patrol, eSafe, and N2H2's Bess. The X-Stop vendor told me he had been in communication with the ATC and the TSF in our district. In response to my questions, he also said his product could be assigned in different configurations for different buildings, assigning by IP address ranges to provide different filtering options for different ages of students. Override passwords are also available, he stressed. The N2H2 vendors were very excited to hear we had Bess already installed in our school district, and they made a point to give me a very nice gift for visiting with them. How ironic it was that I received the nicest vendor gift of the conference from the booth of the very filtering software company that I had grown to dislike.

#### July 2001.

At this time I heard about the work of Bryan Davis, Assistant Director of the Cedar Rapids Public Library. I emailed him and was inspired to hear that informal research he had conducted was enough to convince the nearby Cedar

Rapids Public School District not to install an Internet filtering product. In December of 1999 and January of 2000, he had conducted informal testing on the filter CyberPatrol to find out if it effectively filtered pornography and if it excluded information other than pornography. Using different levels of restriction within CyberPatrol, he found that a significant amount of pornography was blocked, but that there was still access to a large number of pornographic sites. He also found that a great deal of appropriate material was blocked. Mr. Davis concluded that filtering products were not effective enough to warrant the expense and administrative time to manage them, and that teaching students to be productive searchers on the Internet was just as effective. It was reassuring to me to find someone within fifty miles who felt as I did and who was successful in convincing another large Iowa school district not to filter. In my communications with him, Mr. Davis encouraged me to "keep up the fight" (personal communication, July 9, 2001).

#### 2001-2002 School Year

##### August 2001.

Early this month I emailed the ATC to share my conference research on different filtering software. I also wanted to know if he was aware that the CIPA allowed for studying, and not purchasing, filtering technology for this school year. I expressed my thoughts that whatever filter we used should have password override features, a short-term contract, and be configured to not use keyword blocking. I received a reply back from the ATC very promptly. My message to him and his reply are attached as Appendix P. His reply was:

Currently (the TSF) is installing the XSTOP box and will be testing it the next few weeks. As far as the CIPA requirement, we are not worried about that. The reason we have a filter is that the Board told us to install

a filter. If the Board didn't instruct us to install one, we could take the slow approach, but they feel that we need a filter in the district. I will let you know how the XSTOP test goes. Thanks for taking the time to investigate the filter companies. (personal communication, August 8, 2001)

Once school started, I looked for evidence of a filter on my Internet connection. I saw no advertising bar or other filter name on my Internet screens. When I intentionally tried to access a site with nudity, my browser kept searching and searching but would not connect to anything. I suspected the filter was stopping my access to the site, but no matter how long I let the browser search, it never reached either the site or a screen telling me I was being blocked. I also tried to access educational sites that had been blocked the previous year, and all were allowed to be accessed. I didn't know if the filter was fully installed or not.

It was not long before a teacher in my building had a site appear to be inaccessible. Her fifth grade class was researching whether teeth can be considered bones; and when they tried to access a site through Ask Jeeves For Kids, their browser also just kept churning and churning. They were perplexed when they reached neither the site nor a screen telling them they were being blocked. It wasn't until the teacher told me about her bizarre experience that I realized it must be the filter at work.

I decided to email the TSF to ask if the constant churning when trying to access some sites was the filter or not. He wrote back that yes, the constant churning was a result of the filter blocking, but said the filter was not yet sending the correct page notifying the user for some reason. He said the District was still evaluating X-Stop, and that I should call the Help Desk to have sites unblocked as I had in the past.

September 2001.

My husband, a second grade teacher at another school in the District, told me one evening that his students were surprised to be blocked from a site designed for children. They were trying to access the Fun and Games section on the Billy Bear 4 Kids site. They received a screen telling them they were blocked by X-Stop, so my husband filled out the request review form on the webpage to protest the blockage and sent his message to X-Stop. After he described his experience to me, I told him about the Help Desk procedure for getting sites unblocked, which he did not know about. The next day he called the Help Desk to report the blocked site. The TSF called him back and said it was now unblocked and to try it again, but my husband still could not access it. I tried the site at home and could not see why it was blocked. I tried to access the site the next day at school, and I could get into it. That morning our Internet connection was down for a few minutes, and when I tried the site again, this time it was blocked. I called it in to the Help Desk, where the secretary said that the site had been called in earlier and they were working on it. Weeks later, the site was still blocked. The blocking screen for X-Stop is attached as Appendix Q.

About this same time I got a call from a new high school librarian, asking if the filter was on. I said that it was. This librarian told me that students reported to her that they were able to access sites they knew they should not be able to access. She said she was surprised they could access inappropriate sites. At the same time I was internalizing the fact that this was proof that the filter did not filter all of what it was designed to filter. When asked, the high school librarian could not tell me which sites the students were talking about. I suggested that she enforce the District AUP and monitor use of the Internet

more closely. She said she did not want to complain because she did not want more restrictions put on the filter than we already had. I was happy to hear that her views about filtering were similar to mine, and I told her that she might want to join the Filtering Review Committee that met periodically. She was receptive to the idea, and I told her I would let her know about any meetings.

Once again, I found the Renaissance Learning site difficult to use because of the filter. In looking for reading quizzes online as I often do, I was not able to find the information I needed. No matter what title I looked up, the searching cursor just spun and spun, and I was never allowed to reach the information page I sought. I did not use any terms that could be considered nasty or lewd; I searched for several different titles and authors, all with the same results. I called the problem into the Help Desk and waited. There was no response, and no improvements were evident when I periodically tried to search for a reading test in the following days and weeks. After calling the Help Desk again at the end of the month, I received an email message from the TSF saying that the problem had finally been fixed and that the site was working properly once again.

Because I felt that she would be perceived as less threatening than I would be, I called the vocal high school librarian and asked if she would contact the ATC to set up a meeting with the three librarians with trial override passwords to discuss the new filter. She said that she would call him, and that she also needed to let him know right away about a site that a student had accessed in her school that should have been blocked by the filter. That site was Rotten Dot Com. She said the site was very inappropriate at school, and that the District's AUP was being enforced by restricting that student's Internet access at school.

I immediately went to that site on my own computer at school. Sure enough, the site was inappropriate for my students and was not blocked. I quickly found a page with swearing and links to all kinds of gross and tasteless nude pictures. At last, I had proof that the District's filter did not block all it was programmed to block. A selected page from that website is attached as Appendix R (not necessarily rated R).

Later that month I asked a secretary who works at the District administrative building if she knew the cost of the new filter. She asked the TSF about the cost, and he at first told her it was no one's business what the price was. She told him that I was the one who was interested in the information for a paper I was writing. He then said the District had not decided what filter to use for sure, and he refused to quote even a rough estimate of the cost.

Did the TSF truly believe it was no one's business what the filter would cost? Did he not realize that taxpayers had the right to know how their taxes were being spent? Was he so frustrated with Internet filters that he was unwilling to talk about their cost? What filter will the WCSD ultimately decide to use for the 2001-2002 school year? Will the three librarians receive an override password again for the new filter? Will all librarians ultimately receive an override password in the future in the WCSD? What will the outcomes be of the pending legislation regarding tying the use of Internet filters to receiving federal technology funding discounts for schools and public libraries?

### Summary

The goal of this research paper was to describe one Waterloo Community School District elementary school librarian's experiences in dealing with a District-imposed Internet filter. An Internet filter was imposed on public schools and their library media programs in the Waterloo Community School



District. The population of this study consisted of various administrators, School Board members, District facilitators, coordinators, principals, computer technicians, teachers, and secretaries. Data collection methods for this descriptive research included notation, description, analysis, and questioning. The researcher gathered articles from newspapers and periodicals, videotaped and audiotaped meetings, communicated with and kept records of personal email messages with key informants, attended meetings, held conversations, conducted informal interviews, and used the Internet. The most prevalent technique to record data was journaling in notation and description to document incidents as they happened. After data were collected from August of 1999 through September of 2001, they were presented in descriptive narrative form in chronological order by month.

Five research questions were investigated. The first question concerned why the District administration felt the need for an Internet filter on all school computers. Although interviewing the Superintendent might have helped answer this question, the researcher was reluctant to do that because of possibly being perceived as a threat to the peaceful acceptance of the decision to filter. Instead, the researcher heard at a meeting that the Superintendent believed a filter would protect the District's students online, and therefore convinced the School Board to formally approve the installation of filtering hardware and software. The second research question asked what filter the District chose and why it was chosen. After the researcher attended meetings, it was found that the filter Bess by N2H2 was chosen because it was offered to the WCSD free and was highly rated by its accompanying literature. Near the end of the data collection period for this project, however, the District was testing the filter X-Stop, but had not decided whether to switch permanently to X-Stop.

How the filter worked was the next research question. The researcher obtained literature about Bess and X-Stop and learned that they both worked at the District server level by blocking within several different selected categories and by blocking certain keywords and URLs. Through informal questioning, it was discovered that the filter settings were applied in the same configuration for all computers in the WCSD; district computer technicians were being filtered in the same way as students of all ages. Through email messages and personal conversations, it was learned that only two people in the District knew and were authorized to use the override password. By personal experience, it was found that both filters inadvertently blocked many appropriate sites and failed to block some inappropriate sites for users, regardless of the age level of students.

The fourth research question concerned the cognitive and affective results of filter use on the learning experiences of children in the District. The results were obvious and discovered through analysis of personal communication, questioning, and general observation. Because the filter's parameters were applied in the same configuration for all students regardless of age, Internet sites deemed inappropriate for kindergartners were also deemed inappropriate for the District's college-bound, advanced placement eighteen-year-old seniors. Students of all ages were blocked from pertinent information they needed that was readily available on the Internet, sometimes influencing whether the synthesis and evaluation stages of higher level thinking skills could develop adequately in their learning. Even elementary students voiced frustration when they were blocked from sites at school that they wanted to access for information. They openly asked teachers why they could not access certain sites. High school students unequivocally declared their frustrations with being blocked, and many asserted that they would conduct research at

home instead of at school in order to access information from all available online resources. Students who did not have access to the Internet at home were left with no recourse but to seek unfiltered computers elsewhere or to use filtered computers at school.

The fifth and final research question of this study examined the alternatives to filtering in the Waterloo Community School District. Viable alternatives were found through reading and studying journal articles and research papers. Alternatives include educating students and staff about becoming efficient, evaluative, and effective searchers for information on the Internet; refining and enforcing the District's Acceptable Use Policy; having available lists of appropriate Internet sites that are preselected by teachers or librarians; integrating selected websites into electronic catalogs, and monitoring student use of the Internet more effectively. By personal experience, the researcher learned this last alternative could be successful by having all computer screens visible to supervising adults as much as possible.

During the span of this study, the following sites were documented as blocked by the District's Internet filter. Some of them were eventually unblocked by either the ATC or the TSF. The sites are:

1. Baker & Taylor at <http://www.btol.com/index.cfm>
2. Barnes & Noble at <http://www.barnesandnoble.com>
3. Amazon.com main page at <http://www.amazon.com>
4. Lycos Multimedia Search at <http://www.multimedia.lycos.com>
5. Oprah Winfrey site at <http://www.iloveoprah.com>
6. Michael Jordan's Official Website at <http://jordan.sportsline.com>
7. Mary-Kate & Ashley Olsen website at <http://olsenclub.hypermart.net>
8. Iowa Distance Learning Database at <http://www3.iptv.org/>

[iowa\\_database/default.cfm](#)

9. Laura Ingalls Wilder site (URL unavailable)
10. John Deere at <http://www.deere.com/deerecom/Company+Info/History/default.htm>
11. Epals at <http://www.epals.com>
12. Bottomline Distribution Center at <http://www.bldistribution.com>
13. Holocaust at <http://www.mindspring.com/~cleanccl/index.html>
14. AOL's Instant Messenger at <http://www.aol.com/aim/homenew.adp>
15. Renaissance Learning at <http://www.renlearn.com/store/> (blocked numerous times)
16. Shockwave at <http://www.shockwave.com/>
17. Amazon.com (a linked pre order service page) at [http://www.amazon.com/exec/varzea/pre\\_order/](http://www.amazon.com/exec/varzea/pre_order/)
18. Ask Jeeves For Kids at <http://www.ajkids.com/>
19. Billy Bear 4 Kids Fun and Games at <http://www.billybear4kids.com/games/games.htm>

Two sites were documented as unblocked by the District's Internet filter and were therefore accessible to students of all ages. One was the Rotten Dot Com Site at <http://www.rotten.com>. It was eventually blocked by either the ATC or the TSF, after the vocal high school librarian reported it to them. The other inappropriate site not blocked was the Welcome to Fatpig.com Site at <http://www.iloveboys.com> (Appendix S). Both sites were reported to the researcher by the vocal high school librarian, but this time the librarian chose not to turn the second site in to the Help Desk to be blocked for fear that even more blocking restrictions would result.

## Chapter 5

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Summary

The purpose of this research paper was to describe one Waterloo, Iowa, elementary school librarian's experiences in dealing with an Internet filter imposed on public schools and their library media programs by the Waterloo Community School District. The population studied in this paper included various staff members and students of the involved school district. Using descriptive methodology, the writer studied and reported on the impact over time of the Internet filter in the District. As the research was conducted, data were collected by gathering information from a large variety of resources, including newspaper and periodical articles, taped meetings, email communications, personal conversations, and informal interviews. Data for this study were recorded chiefly in observational form and were collected over a period of twenty-six months, from August of 1999 through September of 2001.

#### Conclusions

Several important issues emerge as the results of this study are examined. First and foremost in the researcher's mind is the issue of the decision-making process in the WCSD. It appears that whatever the Superintendent wants, his direct subordinates and School Board members accept and subsequently vote to establish as policy. It seems that his intentions largely go unquestioned by them. For example, when the Superintendent told the ATC he wanted a filter on all computers in the District, the ATC followed his directive without question and proposed to the school board that the N2H2 Bess filter be approved for use. The school board's fear of liability issues and

overriding concern that pornography was a problem led to them concurring with the Superintendent. Without documentation of any complaints that inappropriate Internet use was occurring with students, and without input from anyone else, including District librarians, the Superintendent recommended that the Board approve the installation of filtering hardware and software for all computers. If it were not for one District librarian's formal request for a delay in the decision until the matter could be studied, the Superintendent's recommendation would have been approved at the first meeting when it was introduced, in November of 1999. The researcher truly believes that the Superintendent and School Board acted naively and thought they were doing what was best for students at the time by approving the policy to install an Internet filter. The method they used in their decision-making process is what should be questioned, however.

Within fifty miles of the WCSD and in direct contrast to Waterloo's decision-making process, the Cedar Rapids Community School District held public hearings on Internet filtering before deciding whether to install a filter. Waterloo gave one day's notice to the public that a filter was being considered, and a three minute time limit was imposed for anyone to speak to the topic at the Board meeting. It was an open issue in Cedar Rapids, however, well publicized in advance and open to lengthy discussion and comments from the public. The Cedar Rapids School Board ultimately voted not to install a filter in their schools. They were influenced by the informal research of Mr. Bryan Davis, who is the Assistant Director of the Cedar Rapids Public Library. Mr. Davis's findings in early 2000 concluded that filtering products were not effective enough to warrant the expense and administrative time to manage them, and that teaching students to be productive searchers on the Internet was

just as effective. Their filtering decision was not a “topdown” decision as Waterloo’s had been.

The Cedar Rapids decision not to filter underscored their commitment to strive to do what is best for children. It is not evident that Waterloo set priorities about what is best for students as their top goal in the filtering question; it appears that the overriding concerns of the WCSD include financial considerations and the fear of liability, rather than the protection of inherent freedoms guaranteed by the United States Constitution. Even the local newspaper headlines stressed the financial issue, setting the tone for the whole community to focus on the wrong issues. With little regard for First Amendment rights of students, with no documentation of inappropriate student Internet usage, without considering the best educational practices of teaching children to safely back out of inappropriate sites and to use preselected safe sites, the Board made a naive, money-conscious, fearful autocratic decision to filter in Waterloo. There were, however, no headlines when a new filter would not be cost-free any longer.

Also at issue is the judgment of what is inappropriate for Waterloo students to view and what is not. The School Board at no time stated specifically what they wanted blocked from WCSD students; they said only they wanted to protect children and to avoid liability. Did the School Board intend for humorous sites to be filtered just because someone thinks a funny topic is tasteless or gross? Most students absolutely love humor, yet sometimes find themselves blocked from those sites within the confines of the WCSD firewall and filter. Somehow policies were established determining that categories to be blocked included [all] nudity, gambling, and tastelessness and grossness. Policies were also established which allowed a filtering company, rather than

local professional teachers, to make decisions about specific website content. In Waterloo's case, it is not the School Board choosing what categories of websites to block, nor is it the Superintendent, nor is it the District computer technicians who are deciding. It is ultimately the filtering company that is doing the choosing, already having standard settings ready to be installed. It is the filtering company that is designating what is pornography and what is legal, and they refuse to distribute lists of websites that are blocked by their software. It is the filtering company that is making the important decisions about what is appropriate and what is not appropriate for all WCSD students.

Another issue that greatly troubles the researcher is the implied lack of trust displayed by the Superintendent of adults in the system to make wise decisions to override the filter. Even though at least two Board members publicly expressed their opinions that someone in each school should have the override capability, the Superintendent directed that only two people in the District were to be entrusted with that ability, the ATC and the TSF. Other District technicians are not trusted to have full access to essential downloads and other software tools, executive secretaries are not trusted to override the filter when necessary to conduct business online, and librarians and other technology experts at the building level are not trusted to make sound decisions about immediately accessing educational information. Every one of them has to follow a designated process to get sites unblocked by the ATC or the TSF. The time-consuming practice consists of going to a phone, connecting to an outside line (often a difficult task), contacting the District Technology Help Desk, painstakingly reading the URL letters and characters to the secretary or voice mail machine, waiting for the ATC or TSF to receive the information and unblock the site, and revisiting the site to finally access the needed information at a later



time. Did the School Board approve policies to entrust the override password to only two employees? No, they did not. Did the School Board vote to invoke the standard filter settings prescribed by the N2H2 company? No, they did not. Did the School Board approve a policy to put in place the procedure to get websites unblocked by calling the Help Desk? No, they did not. The researcher believes that the School Board trusted the administration to make the administrative decisions concerning the filter, not realizing that unwritten policies were being implemented but not disseminated to staff members to understand. Another related issue involves the fact that a non-educator is one of the two entrusted individuals with the override capability. The ATC does not have a background in education at all, and yet he is entrusted with making most of the filtering decisions in the District!

Related to the lack of trust in adults by the District is the fact that very few employees are even aware of the possibility of overriding the filter. Most are totally ignorant of the fact that there is a process by which a blocked website can be opened with an override password. This situation is largely a consequence of two things: The District administration has not advertised the fact that there is a way to open blocked sites, and many District librarians have not informed their building staffs of that process. All librarians have been informed numerous times of the method to unblock sites by the researcher herself, but non-librarian acquaintances of the researcher in other buildings have, for the most part, never heard there is an override process.

Another conclusion that can be drawn concerns the general lack of support from most of the other District librarians for opposing the Internet filter. This lack of support was shown by very poor attendance at meetings concerning the filter, by poor response to email requests for filter discussions

made by the researcher, and by the lack of volunteers to serve on the filter review committee. Most of the current WCSD librarians are graduates of the same School Library Media Studies department of the nearby University of Northern Iowa, thereby receiving similar instruction in the role of librarians as defenders of intellectual freedom, yet only three other librarians were willing to speak openly about their feelings regarding the filter. The researcher concludes that this lack of support was due to either personal convictions of District librarians or lack of experience in using the Internet in the school setting. Some librarians could have been generally apathetic towards the filtering issue or unwilling to openly take risks, just by their personal natures; taking the path of least resistance is easier, too. Others were trained before the Internet came into being, and were not trained in integrating the Internet into library research or classroom instruction as the researcher was. Perhaps some of those librarians were relieved to have the filter in place because they were not as knowledgeable or as comfortable as the researcher in using the Internet. In addition, some librarians' schools have not attempted to infuse Internet technology into the curriculum to the extent that the researcher's school has, and so their experiences with the filter were not as extensive. In fact, the researcher's school was one of the first in the District to have all classrooms completely wired to the Internet. Whatever the reasons for the lack of support by other librarians, this lack of unity makes the researcher appear to be a very prominent, almost sole opponent of Internet filtering in the District, which did not help further the cause for intellectual freedom in the WCSD. Without more voices to share in the quest for the rights of children, the researcher's hopes of either eliminating the filter or obtaining override passwords for all staff members are unattainable.

One troubling outcome of this research study involves the possibility that society today may be in danger of depending too heavily on technological advances, allowing these technology tools to assume the job of thinking for society. Are we allowing what technology can do get in the way of individual long held beliefs and constitutional rights? Are we inadvertently training our students to depend on Internet filters to think for them, to select for them exactly what sites to use for research or other investigations online? Shouldn't we as educators be teaching our students how to use online resources responsibly and safely? Shouldn't we be instructing students how to back out of undesirable sites, how to avoid harmful sites, how to use preselected sites or search engines designed for children, and how to critically evaluate information on the Internet? The researcher fears that students will not know how to be safe, responsible users of online resources in non-filtered environments because of learned dependence on filters in school settings. A professor at the University of Northern Iowa, Dr. B. R. Safford comments on this issue succinctly when she says, "Just because technology can doesn't mean technology should" (personal conversation, October 23, 2001).

One very important issue concerns the chosen settings of the filter. The filtering settings were configured in only one way across the District, and did not vary at all from one building to another, from elementary schools to high schools. No levels of appropriateness were taken in consideration according to the age level of students. The same filtering categories were blocked for prekindergarten students as were blocked for college-bound, advanced placement eighteen-year-old seniors, regardless of maturity or age level of the student. Whether this was an infringement of rights of eighteen-year-old students as adults was never fully considered. Allowing the researcher and two

other librarians of the filter review committee to propose changes in the settings in May of 2001 was a definite improvement in the filter, but those improved settings still provided the same filtering limitations for the youngest students as for the oldest students in the District. It is possible to assign individualized levels of filtering to different Internet addresses for different buildings in the District, thereby addressing the diverse needs of different ages of students, but this was not done. The researcher does not know if money was a factor in deciding whether to implement those options, or whether the ATC or Superintendent deliberately chose the same settings for all students and staff.

Also important to note is the question concerning whether the expense and time involved in administering and dealing with the filter is worth its effectiveness. In order to meet CIPA requirements in receiving crucial technology funding, school districts now have to decide whether to pay thousands of dollars per year for filters; this includes the Waterloo Community School District. Administrative technicians in the WCSD literally have spent hundreds of hours studying, installing, and adjusting filters to operate as desired. Librarians, students, and other staff members have spent untold hours looking for alternate information to use in place of that which has been blocked by the filter. Is all this expended time and money worth the advantages of having the Internet filtered in the WCSD? The researcher does not believe so. Because Internet filters are not refined enough, because they both block innocuous sites and fail to block some inappropriate sites, and because a provision in the law allows schools to postpone purchasing filters until July of 2002, the researcher concludes that the WCSD should wait to install a filter until the July 2002 deadline or until pending lawsuits are settled. The researcher believes that educating students and staff about how to be efficient, safe,

evaluative, and effective users of Internet information is the best way to protect District users on the Internet. The researcher also believes that the District Acceptable Use Policy should be enforced for students and staff alike, that Internet usage by students should be closely monitored by adults, and that preselected, appropriate websites should be used whenever possible. If a filter is ultimately to be used in the District, the researcher concludes that different filtering settings should be assigned to match different age levels of students, and that any adult should be assigned an override password if they request one.

Although the researcher put herself in a precarious position by becoming quite vocal in the filtering debate in her school district, she has come to the conclusion that this is an example of how one person can make a difference. Had she not been the impetus behind the request to delay the decision on the filter installation in November of 1999, the filter might well have been installed right then and become a moot point for discussion. Had she not instigated and continued dialog with other District librarians about the filter issue, the District filter review committee might not have been formed. Had she not volunteered to be a part of the filter review committee, the outcomes of the committee meeting might have been vastly different. Had she not communicated her concerns about the filter over time with the ATC, he might never have considered changing the filter settings and override password regulations. Had she not asked for a trial run of using a limited override password for the small group of librarians on the filter review committee, that trial period might not have occurred. In conclusion, civic courage to question, civic courage to challenge, and civic courage to lobby for change did make a difference.

### Recommendations for Further Study

Several recommendations can be made for further study of this issue of children's use of the Internet in schools. Further study in the Waterloo Community School District could include collecting new data beginning at the point in time in which this researcher ended her collection of data. This research project could also be replicated in other school districts across the country. A study could be conducted to examine student use of the Internet in a school district that does not use Internet filtering. That study could determine the extent to which problems actually exist with students accessing inappropriate websites in schools where students are instructed on safe use of the Internet and have proper supervision, and where an effective AUP is in place and enforced. Finding out exactly what school board members know and understand about constitutional rights is another possible project for further study.

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N2H2 <sup>www.n2h2.com</sup>

# School board to look at stretching dollars

By **STACY NICK**  
Courier Staff Writer

## WATERLOO

A new financial management proposal for sales tax revenue could provide the school district with an extra \$425,000 to \$450,000 for school infrastructure.

The Board of Education will discuss the plan at Monday's meeting and set the date for a public hearing on the idea.

The plan, created by Speer Financial and endorsed by the Citizens Review Committee, was presented earlier this month to board members so they could gain a clear understanding of it.

### Board meeting

*The Waterloo Board of Education will meet Monday at 7 p.m. at the Education Service Center, 1516*

The three-year proposal would use sales tax revenue conservatively while investing in bonds so that idle money earns interest.

The board also will decide on a new Internet filtering system. The Bess Internet Filtering and Caching Service catalogs Internet content through 100 percent human review, and automated search technology allows schools to make filtering decisions at the local lev-

el. The customization of the program allows the district to permit specific Web sites and limit access to that site.

Service to The Bess Partner Program, is free. Sponsors assume all costs, including a set-up fee of \$4,000 and annual filtering fee of \$9,400.

In exchange, sponsors, including Gateway PCs, M&Ms, Toshiba, Office of National Drug Control Policy and Discovery Health, will be able to place messages on a specially designed tool bar at the bottom of the screen.

Each message is reviewed before it appears on the network to see that it won't detract from the educational environment.

## Appendix B

# School board to consider Internet filtering system

By STACY NICK  
Courier Staff Writer

WATERLOO

The Waterloo Board of Education will once again look at using an Internet filtering service that would save it \$25,000 over two years.

Last month the board postponed the approval and installment of Bess Internet Filtering and Caching Service so that staff members could take a look at the system.

The program would keep students out of inappropriate Web sites but several Waterloo media specialists expressed concern that it could hinder students' ability to find Internet sites in their research in a timely and efficient manner.

Waterloo Middle School media specialist [redacted] asked the board to postpone their decision until those who deal with the classroom and library computers get a chance to use it.

One of the highlights of the program is that the sites are "100 percent human reviewed" including scanning by computers to provide a more complete fil-

ter, said [redacted] district administrative technology coordinator.

The human review prevents the elimination of sites that are beneficial or addition of harmful sites based on single word analysis.

The service would be free to the district. In exchange for software and technical aid, the service's sponsors, including M&Ms, Gateway PCs, EPA and Family Education Network, are allowed to run a toolbar at the bottom of every screen with promotional messages.

The messages do not interfere with Internet use and are screened beforehand to ensure they don't distract from the educational environment, [redacted] said.

The system is becoming a popular choice with school districts. Cedar Rapids uses this filter and even endorses it on the company's brochures. Cities, including Los Angeles, New York and Seattle, are also using the program.

The Waterloo Board of Education will meet Monday at 7 p.m. at the Educational Service Center, 1516 Washington St.

1-9-00  
Waterloo  
Courier  
P.C.3

## Appendix C

## Schools to install Internet filtering program

By **STACY NICK**  
Courier Staff Writer

### WATERLOO

In a unanimous decision Monday, the Waterloo Board of Education approved a new Internet filtering site for the district.

Bess Internet Filtering and Caching Service, a system that blocks "inappropriate" Web sites, will be installed on a trial basis on all school computers. A report will be given at the end of the school year on whether to keep the program.

The system was set for approval in November but Waterloo school media staff argued they were never informed of the addition of a filtering system and wanted to look it over before any decision was made.

The computer check can eliminate sites including the American Cancer Society's because it contains the word "breast" in relation to breast cancer. However sites are also "human reviewed," which corrects

this as necessary, and passwords are available to unlock a site.

██████████ Middle School Media Specialist ██████████ is critical of the service because it may be seen as a cure-all.

"We must remember that filters will not fully protect students," ██████████ said. "Additional steps must be taken."

Staff and student Internet training are also essential, she said. Otherwise they find ways to get around the blocks or go home and look up the "forbidden" sites.

Several staff members are opposed to Internet filtering because it doesn't work to promote responsible Internet use.

"We're trying to teach kids that they have certain freedoms and rights," ██████████ High Media Specialist ██████████ said. "With filters we're taking some of that away. We need to teach responsibility."

There was also concern over the program's commercial approach.

In exchange for free software and

technical service, the company's sponsors, including M&Ms, Gateway PCs, EPA and Family Education Network, run a toolbar at the bottom of every screen with promotional messages. The service will save the district almost \$15,000 in start-up costs and \$10,000 for each additional year it's used.

The messages do not interfere with Internet use or the educational process and are screened beforehand to ensure they aren't distracting to students, said ██████████, district administrative technology coordinator.

Although she didn't support the installment of the filter, Irving Elementary Media Specialist Chris Murphy proposed a trial run of the program with the stipulation that the district equip every media specialist with the password to override the program.

"I can see the handwriting on the wall - I know you want this," she said. "... I just think there's a better way."

P. B3

JAN. 11, 2000

## Appendix D

### Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable bases, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.  
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,  
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,  
by the ALA Council.



## Appendix E

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Waterloo Community School District**  
**County of Black Hawk, State of Iowa**  
**January 10, 2000**

The Board of Education of the Waterloo Community School District, County of Black Hawk, State of Iowa, was called to meet in regular session at 7:00 p.m., Monday, January 10, 2000 in the Board Room of the Education Service Center, 1516 Washington Street, Waterloo, Iowa.

**Present:** Directors: Don Hanson, Bob Heaton, Craig Holdiman, Dave Juon, Robert Krause, Lyle Schmitt, and Robert Smith  
 Superintendent, Dr. Arlis Swartzendruber  
 Associate Superintendent for Human Resources, Bev Smith  
 Associate Superintendent for Educational Services, Dr. John Van Pelt  
 Executive Director of Financial Services/Treasurer, Greg Schmitz  
 Director of Special Needs, Patrick Clancy  
 Director of Student Services, Bernard Cooper  
 Director of Staff Services, Sharon Droste  
 Director of Operations, Jack Fitzgerald  
 Director of School and Community Relations/Board Secretary, Sharon R. Miller  
 Director of Volunteers, Michelle Temeyer  
 Director of Curriculum, Dr. Peggy Wainwright

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Moment of Silence**

It was moved by Mr. Hanson and seconded by Mr. Heaton that the Board of Education amend the agenda by adding Public Hearing—Network Infrastructure for all Waterloo Community Schools. Motion carried 7-0.

**III. Minutes of the December 13<sup>th</sup> Regular and December 16<sup>th</sup> Special Board Meetings**

It was moved by Mr. Hanson and seconded by Mr. Heaton that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the December 13, 1999 regular and December 16, 1999 special Board meeting minutes. Motion carried 7-0.

**IIIA. Public Hearing—Network Infrastructure for all Waterloo Community Schools**

Public Hearing held. No oral or written presentations received. It was moved by Mr. Juon and seconded by Mr. Holdiman that the Board of Education close the Public Hearing. Motion carried 7-0.

**IV. Information from Individuals and Delegations – Agenda Items**

Ms. Sharon Gatewood, media specialist, expressed concern about internet filtering and student protection. She suggested that additional steps be taken, such as teacher use of “bookmarks” and instructing students on how to disengage from inappropriate sites. She asked for continued teacher training at the building level.

██████████ media specialist, thanked Board members for postponing their vote on internet filtering to allow further staff investigation of the issue. She spoke in opposition to internet filtering, noting that professional journals can be blocked and that time can be a factor in getting sites reviewed and/or fixed. She asked that the software be installed for a trial period of, perhaps, two months. She also asked that one person at each building have an “override” password.

██████████ media specialist, responded to a question from Mr. Schmitt about closing a website. She expressed concern about student rights if the filtering software is used. She asked that media specialists have the password. She noted that some sites are blocked and may not be available for extensive research.

## V. Board Celebration

Ms. Sharon Miller announced that Ms. Diane McCarty, principal of Kittrell Elementary School was recently an honored guest of the Japanese government as a participant in the Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program. Ms. McCarty was selected from a national pool of over 2500 applicants by a panel of educators to earn this honor. Ms. McCarty was able to share her cultural experiences with Kittrell students through the ICN. She commended her staff, Ms. Jo Dorhout and the ESC for their support. Ms. McCarty provided information on her trip and answered Board questions.

## VI. Consent Agenda

Mr. Heaton asked that Item F be removed. The consent agenda was approved unanimously, as revised. Items approved were: Open Enrollment Applications (continuous—out of the district); Open Enrollment Applications (new—into the district) Open Enrollment Application—Denial (late); Bills Due and Payable and Bills Paid Between Board Meetings; Personnel Appointments and Adjustments.

### Item F Open Enrollment Application—Denial (tuition)

It was moved by Mr. Holdiman and seconded by Mr. Juon to deny the open enrollment application of one student since per pupil cost for Expo is higher than tuition paid for open enrollment students. There was lengthy discourse on this issue, including concerns expressed about tuition revenue and Expo's waiting list. Mr. Russ Clark, Expo principal, came forward to address questions. He noted the cost to run Expo's program would not change if this student were admitted. He said it would, however, mean that a Waterloo student would be denied, because there is a waiting list. He said Expo's current enrollment is 220-230 students. Dr. Swartzendruber noted the motion should have contained additional information. Mr. Greg Schmitz said he didn't feel enrolling the student at Expo was a viable option because Expo is an alternative school and this could set a dangerous precedent. He explained that the average cost for students at Expo is higher than the 1.0 monies and that the District could get into a situation where it was subsidizing other districts. He said the district might be able to provide the option of allowing outside students at cost. Mr. Smith commented that Waterloo is getting more students who have been out of high school for a period of time and who are now realizing the importance of an education. He said it's difficult to meet those students' needs. It was moved by Mr. Schmitt and seconded by Mr. Heaton to amend the motion by changing the reason for denial to "because sufficient space was not available to accommodate the student." Mr. Juon suggested the open enrollment issue as related to alternative schools be reviewed. Motion carried 7-0. Motion as amended carried 7-0.

## VII. Waterloo Millennium Strategic Planning Process – Information Only

Mr. Don Temeyer, City Planning Office, and Mr. Joe Vich, President, Community National Bank, presented information using overheads. There will be a series of forums soliciting community input on various issues: community and economic development, neighborhood diversity, public safety, health and human services, leisure and cultural opportunity and education and youth. Mr. Robert Smith, Ms. Liz Crowley and the Superintendent will serve on the planning committee. Mr. Vich noted that his bank's partner is Grant Elementary and that the principal, Ms. Liz Crowley, was recently honored in the *Courier* as being one of the community's top ten leaders.

## VIII. Donation of Emergency Monies

It was moved by Mr. Juon and seconded by Mr. Holdiman that the Board of Education approve accepting the donation from McElroy Trust of \$2500 to be shared equally by Black Hawk, Irving, Kittrell, Kingsley and Orange elementary schools for emergency purposes. Motion carried 7-0.

## IX. Internet Filtering

It was moved by Mr. Hanson and seconded by Mr. Schmitt that the Board of Education approve installation of filtering hardware and software. Mr. [REDACTED], Administrative Technology Coordinator, addressed questions about passwords. He said the group, not just one individual, should make this decision. Mr. Krause asked that a progress report could be made available in March or April. Mr. Holdiman suggested the district use the software through the end of the school year, then make a decision. Mr. [REDACTED] indicated the system could be ready for installation as early as one week. Dr. Swartzendruber said a report could be ready by this summer. Mr. [REDACTED] said BESS has significantly updated the system and that reports indicating the software slows some computers was in 1998. [REDACTED], Technical Coordinator, said the BESS system came out on top in evaluations that did reviews. Motion carried 7-0.

**X. Appointment for 1999-2000 School Improvement Advisory Committee**

It was moved by Mr. Juon and seconded by Mr. Hanson that the Board of Education approve the appointment of the 1999-2000 School Improvement Advisory Committee. Motion carried 7-0.

**XI. Network Infrastructure Cabling for All Waterloo Community Schools**

It was moved by Mr. Juon and seconded by Mr. Holdiman that the Board of Education approve the bid from the company with the best proposal for network infrastructure for all Waterloo Community Schools. Mr. Dennis Rowray, Systems Facilitator, answered questions pertaining to routers and servers not receiving bids. He noted that RFPs were posted on the internet through the E-Rate program. Mr. Schmitt expressed concern that the district might not be operating within its own policy in this regard. Mr. Jack Fitzgerald, Operations Manager, explained that, since the information was posted on the internet and available globally, the district had met its obligations. It was noted that all bids accepted are contingent upon USF funding. Motion carried 7-0.

**XII. High School Programs of Studies 2000-2001- Information Only**

Dr. John Van Pelt provided background information and noted this item will come back before the Board for approve at the next meeting. Mr. Martin Van Roekel addressed questions relating to AP classes. Mr. Heaton asked if consideration had been given to staggering schedules by one half-hour. Dr. Van Pelt said that there might be other options available.

**XIII. Cedar Valley Coalition**

It was moved by Mr. Heaton and seconded by Mr. Juon that the Board of Education approve the district's partnership with the Cedar Valley Coalition and approve representation for the annual Washington DC visit. Dr. Swartzendruber said this issue would be brought back to the Board prior to deciding who will represent the district in Washington. He said the dates are March 28-30. Motion carried 7-0.

**XIV. Board Policy Changes (final reading)**

It was moved by Mr. Holdiman and seconded by Mr. Hanson that the Board of Education approve the following policies for final reading. Motion carried 7-0.

- \*204.5 *Gifts to Board of Education Members*
- 217.0 *School Board Memberships*
- \*402.8 *Gifts to Employees*
- 403.51 *Grievance Policies*
- 408.61 *Tax Sheltered Annuities*
- 408.7 *Health and Major Medical Insurance (formerly Insurance—Hospital-Medical)*
- 501.8 *Voluntary Student Transfer Program*

\* *New Policies*

**XV. Board Policy Changes (first reading)**

The policies listed below were presented as information only.

- 412.0 *Merit Pay*
- 802.1 *Crisis Procedure Plans and Drills (formerly Emergency Plans)*
- 900.6 *Visitors to the Schools*

**XVI. Superintendent's Report**

In his report to the Board, Dr. Swartzendruber announced that Mr. Kerry Leonard, OWP & P, would present his final report on facilities at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, January 14. He said Mr. Leonard would also share a summary of his adaptability study for the district's elementary schools. He encouraged Board members to ask questions at the presentation and said a workshop date needs to be set. He said he will meet with his Administrative Team to review the entire packet and the Team would raise additional questions.

**XVII. Information from Individuals and Delegations – Nonagenda Items**

No one came forward.

**XVIII. Information from Board Members**

Mr. Lyle Schmitt asked when facilities presentations were scheduled at the high schools. Ms. Alyce Ham, media specialist, noted that architects have made presentations at buildings on an ongoing basis. Dr. Swartzendruber explained that the goal is, at the end of ten years, to address as many needs at the high school level as possible. He said there would be discussion on the pacing of projects. He applauded the architects, saying they have been sensitive, thorough and conservative.

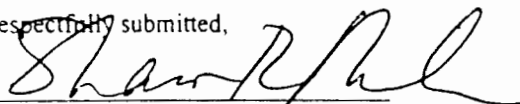
Mr. Robert Smith reminded everyone that the next Board meeting would begin at 5:00 p.m. to allow participation in the caucuses.

**XIX. Adjourn**

It was moved by Mr. Schmitt and seconded by Mr. Krause that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting. Motion carried 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ms. Sharon R. Miller, Board Secretary

1-24-00

Date Approved by the Board of Education

Appendix F

Sunday, March 19, 2000

Bess Can't Go There

Page: 1

*Stop screen  
for http://multimedia.  
lycos.com*

**THE WEB SITE YOU HAVE REQUESTED CANNOT BE ACCESSED. YOU CAN...**

*Enter A Different URL  
Search The Internet  
Explore The Features In Searchopolis*

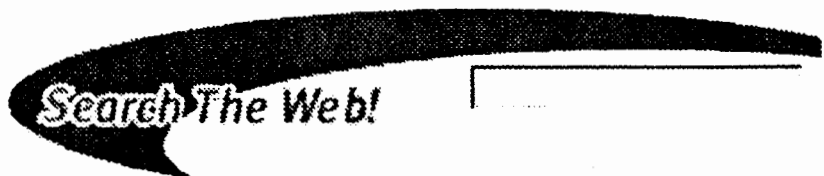


**REQUEST REVIEW**

**AUTHORIZED OVERRIDE**

**NEW FILTERING POLICY**

**SEARCHOPOLIS**  
Go To Searchopolis Resources



**FILTERED INTERNET BROUGHT TO YOU BY...**




Appendix G

Thursday May 11, 2000

Bess Can't Go There

Page



THE TERM YOU USED WAS NOT ALLOWED IN THAT SEARCH ENGINE. YOU MAY CLICK  TO RUN THIS SEARCH IN SEARCHOPOLIS.



**SEARCHOPOLIS**  
Go To Searchopolis Resources

Search: \_\_\_\_\_



The Web

**ENCARTA**  
ONLINE DELUXE

*Wouldn't let me search for  
'Cock a Doodle Dudley'  
to order Accelerated  
Reader Test*

FILTERED INTERNET BROUGHT TO YOU BY...

**Click here and  
we'll pay your bills**

**Net.B@nk**  
www.netbank.com

## Appendix H

# Technology Department Memo

---

**Date:** May 11, 2000  
**To:** Chris Murphy  
**From:** [REDACTED], Technology Coordinator *AS*  
**Re:** Bess Filter Password

---

In response to your many requests for the filter password, I am compelled to send you this memo. The District's policy is to have the Technology Department handle all the Administrative functions on the filtering software. Your repeated requests for the password will not change the policy, and requests for your student-worker will definitely not be granted.

If you are running into sites that are being blocked, there are procedures set up to assist you with overcoming these blocks. Within Bess, you may select the "Request Review" and have the staff at N2H2 review your request. If there is an emergency, you may contact the Help Desk at 4813 and receive a ticket number for service, or try to get in contact with myself. I will make every effort to respond to your request and put in an override for an educational request.

All filter problems have been logged on the Help Desk in order to track the overall success of the filter. Since the implementation of the filter on 3/9/00, there have been 28 calls logged for the filter, with the majority of those calls coming during the first few days. Local overrides have been put into the system 6 times for educational purposes during this time period. The District has been averaging around 189,000 requests a day on the Internet, with a blockage rate of .77%.


I hope this clarifies the District's position on this matter.

cc: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Appendix I

# Technology Department Memo

---

Date: May 9, 2001  
To: Chris Murphy. [REDACTED]  
From: [REDACTED] Technology Coordinator   
Re: Filter

---

After our meeting last night, I did some digging into the setup of the filter. Attached are some documents explaining what the filter categories are, our current settings, a sample of possible setting changes, and a blank filter that you can help construct. I am asking for your help with the blank filter sheet. Please fill in the categories you think we should be filtering, keeping in mind that we will filter, and please write up why you don't want certain categories filtered so that we can explore our options.

Since the three of you were the only media specialists present, you can be the test group. Between the four of us, we should be able to make some progress on the filter. If possible, keep the filter experiments between the four of us until we have some firm changes to implement.

I am going to set up an override password for each of you to use on a specific computer, so when you send the blank filter sheet back, send the IP of the computer that you will be using to override the filter. If the experiment with the password is a success, I will take the results to Arlis and recommend that all media specialists have a password. Please keep the fact that you have the password confidential, eliminating the other media specialists and administration dissatisfaction of not being included in the test. Remember that this is a test, and our small group of four is a good number to work with.

Your quick response will allow us to try some of the changes before the school year is over.



Exhibit J

Center

Customer Support: 206-336-1559 (Voice) | 206-336-1556 (FAX) | techsupport@n2h2.com

Emergency Support: 800-246-1174 (Voice) | 911@n2h2.com

Statistics

Authorized User

Local Override Database

Request Site Review

Cache Administration

System Maintenance

IP Control

Instruction Sets

Options

Filter Schedules

Filter Builder

Help ?

### Filter Builder: Bess With Freemail

Summary of Filter. To edit one of the predefined filters select the filter and "copy" it, you will be prompted to name the filter, it will then appear in the section below.

Click View Another Filter to select another Filter.

View Another Filter

Copy

#### Special Rules Summary **NO**

Block urls based on key words.

Block search engine results based on key words. **?**

#### Block Summary

- |   |   |  |                                     |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults Only           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alcohol           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chat             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hate / Discrimination | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drugs             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Free Pages       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gambling              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tasteless / Gross | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illegal          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profanity             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lingerie          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nudity           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal Information                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personals         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Porn Site        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Cheating Info  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suicide / Murder | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Tobacco   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Violence          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weapons          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

#### Exceptions Summary

For Kids Sites

Education

Many are worthless

it kind?

These are information?

THIS IS THE FILTER/SETTINGS THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY RUNNING.

Could allow 'History' 'Medical'

## Exhibit K

## N2H2 Filter Category Descriptions

The system administrator of each proxy server may select from these categories to block access to sites. "Exceptions" will override other categories and **ALLOW** access to sites that would otherwise be blocked.

Primary Secondary Distractions Exceptions Special Rules

Categories marked with a ★ are used in the standard Best for Schools configuration.

### Primary

---

#### ★ Adults Only

Material labeled by its author or publisher as being strictly for adults. (Examples: "Adults only", "You must be 18 to visit this site", "Registration is allowed only for people 18 or older", "You must be of legal drinking age to visit this site")

- <http://www.riddler.com/>
- <http://www.rights.org/deathnet/AS.html>
- <http://www.match.com/>

#### ★ Hate/Discrimination

Advocating discrimination against others based on race, religion, gender, nationality, or sexual orientation.

- <http://www.stormfront.org/>

#### ★ Illegal

Advocating, promoting, or giving advice on carrying out acts widely considered illegal. This includes lock-picking, bomb-making, fraud, breaching computer security ("hacking"), phone service theft ("phreaking"), pirating software, or evading law enforcement.

- <http://phoenix.phreebyrd.com/~nero/tacb/>
- <http://www.lysator.liu.se/mit-guide/>
- <http://www.hyperreal.org/drugs/synthesis/>

#### ★ Pornography

Material intended to be sexually arousing or erotic. (See also Sex and Nudity.)

- <http://www.clublove.com/>
- <http://www.nifty.org/>

#### ★ Sex

Images or descriptions of sexual activity. Any sexual merchandise. (See also Sex and Nudity.)

- <http://www.nmt.edu/~kscott/purity/>
- <http://www.adamandeve.com/>
- <http://www.geocities.com/~zeetee/>

### ★ Violence

Graphic images or written descriptions of wanton violence or grave injury (mutilation, maiming, dismemberment, etc.). Includes graphically violent games.

###

## Secondary Group

---

### ★ Alcohol

Advocating or promoting recreational use of alcohol. (See also Adults Only)

- <http://www.realbeer.com/>
- <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cariadoc/drinks.html>
- <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/noyb/>

### ★ Chat

Chat sites, services that allow short messages to be sent to others immediately in real time. Downloadable chat software. (See also Moderated.)

- <http://www.talkcity.com/>
- <http://www.chatplanet.com/>
- <http://www.icq.com/>

### ★ Drugs

Advocating or promoting recreational use of any controlled substance. (Also see Illegal.)

- <http://www.hightimes.com/>
- <http://ecstasy.org/e4x/>

### ★ Free Mail

Sites that offer e-mail accounts over the Web for free. Such sites can expose users to harmful content delivered via e-mail file attachments. Blocking such sites also helps to enforce local acceptable-use policies when e-mail is already provided locally to users.

- <http://www.hotmail.com/>
- <http://www.rocketmail.com/>
- <http://mail.yahoo.com/>

### ★ Free Pages

capricious abuse of their services by users who post offensive content under multiple pseudonyms, making them difficult to track. Individual pages that have been reviewed by N2H2 on such sites are removed from this category, but filed under other categories as necessary.

- <http://www.geocities.com/neighborhoods/>
- <http://www.angelfire.com/>

### ★ **Gambling**

Gambling services, or information relevant primarily to gambling.

- <http://www.intercasino.com/>
- <http://www.uslottery.com/>
- <http://www.excalibur-casino.com/>

### ★ **Tasteless/Gross**

Bodily functions. Tasteless humor. Graphic medical photos. Some extreme forms of body modification (cutting, branding, genital piercing).

- <http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/~jp45/Tasteless1.html>

### ★ **Lingerie**

Models in lingerie (except those that qualify for Nudity).

- <http://www.lovelyvisionslingerie.com/>
- <http://baldo10.simplenet.com/>

### ★ **Message/Bulletin Boards**

Sites that permit semi-permanent messages to be posted and read by others. (See also Moderated.)

- <http://boards.pathfinder.com/>
- [http://www.swoon.com/k\\_forums/forums.html](http://www.swoon.com/k_forums/forums.html)

### ★ **Nudity**

Bare or visible genitalia, pubic hair, buttocks, female breasts, etc (See also Swimsuits, Lingerie, Sex and Pornography.)

- <http://www.pinup.com/teddygirls/>
- <http://www.webimplosion.com/kring/>

### ★ **Personal Information**

Sites that gather personal information (name, address, phone number, etc.).

### ★ **Profanity**

Crude, vulgar, or obscene language or gestures.

- <http://www.krug.org/unit/scripts/dogs.html>
- <http://www.well.com/user/zoodec/bar/>

## ✧ Murder/Suicide

Information on committing murder or suicide.

- <http://www.rights.org/deathnet/AS.html>

## ✧ School Cheating Info

Any site that promotes plagiarism or similar cheating among students (such as by offering term papers, exam keys, etc.).

- <http://www.schoolsucks.com/>
- <http://www.essayxstacy.com/>

## ✧ Tobacco

Advocating or promoting recreational use of tobacco. (See also Adults Only.)

- <http://www.smokers.com/>
- <http://www.finckcigarcompany.com/>
- <http://www.cybersmoke.com/>

## ✧ Weapons

Information on use of weapons, weapon collecting, or weapon making.

- <http://www.palousemunitions.com/>

###

## Distractions

---

### Auction

All URLs that offer access to online auctions. Online auctions are rarely monitored for content and contain rapidly changing material, potentially exposing users to material that would otherwise be filtered under other categories, such as PORN, WEAPONS, LINGERIE, VIOLENCE, etc.

- <http://www.ebay.com/>
- <http://auctions.yahoo.com/>
- <http://auctions.amazon.com/>

### Electronic Commerce

The E-Commerce category includes any site that allows users to make online purchases of any commodity. In addition to potentially posing a risk to users by offering direct access to commodities normally filtered under other categories, such as Weapons, Profanity, Lingerie, Porn, etc, these sites may be considered a distraction from normal productive use of the Internet.

- <http://www.amazon.com/>
- <http://www.cdnow.com/>

## Games

Computer games and related information, whether playable on-line or downloadable. (Also see Gambling and Violence.)

- <http://www.gamesdomain.com/>
- <http://www.ten.net/>
- <http://www.zone.com/>

## Employment Search

Job-hunting and related employment resources.

- <http://www.monsterboard.com/>
- <http://jobs.genmills.com/>

## Jokes

Jokes and humor.

- <http://www.netfunny.com/>
- <http://www.well.com/user/zoodc/bar/>
- <http://www.veeeoww.com/yecch/yecchhome.html>

## News

News and current events.

## ★ Personals

Personal advertisements, including "mail-order brides." (See also Adults Only.)

- <http://www.appleagency.com/>
- <http://www.match.com/>
- [http://personals.swoon.com/e\\_personals/personals.html](http://personals.swoon.com/e_personals/personals.html)

## Recreation/Entertainment

Recreation and entertainment information other than Games, Jokes, or Sports.

- <http://www.sidewalk.com/>

## Sports

Sports information, especially professional sports.

- <http://espn.sportszone.com/>
- <http://www.nhl.com/>
- <http://www.curling.com/>

## Stocks

Stock trading, stock quotes, stock market information, etc.

## Swimsuits

Models in swimwear, especially fashion swimwear photos.

- <http://www.bikini.com/>

- <http://cnnsi.com/features/1998/swimsuit/>

###

## Exceptions

The categories below are used to allow access to sites that may be otherwise blocked by one of the other categories above.

### ★ Education

Material under another category (such as Sex, Nudity, or Violence) that has educational value (such as classic literature, history, sex education, etc.)

### For Kids

Sites that are designed specifically for kids.

- <http://www.bess.net>
- <http://www.disney.com>

### History

Material that falls under another category (such as Sex or Violence) that is non-fictional and historically significant.

### ★ Medical

Material under another category (such as Nudity or Tasteless/Gross) that relates to the study or practice of medicine.

- <http://worldmail.com/erf/autopsy.htm>
- <http://fbhc.org/Patients/BetterHealth/BreastCancer/exam.html>

### Moderated

A "Message/Bulletin Board" or "Chat" site that prevents offensive material from being posted.

### Text/Spoken Only

Material under another category that is strictly verbal (i.e. text or spoken word). This can be used, for example, to distinguish written erotica from graphical "Porn" sites.

- <http://www.nifty.org/>

## Special Rules

Below are special rules that the proxy uses. These are not necessarily based on the content of the page but will help prevent inappropriate ads and links to inappropriate sites from being displayed for your users.

- **Block URLs based on key words contained in the URL:** This feature blocks based on key words in the url itself. URLs that contain words such as "xxx" are blocked.
- **★ Block search engine results based on key words:** This feature does not block the use of any search engines but blocks search engine results based on a comprehensive list of terms such as "porn" and "xxx". This rule does not block any other pages based on these key words, only search result pages.
- **Block Unfiltered Search Results:** This feature blocks result pages of search engines that do not filter their results. It will only allow search engines that claim to limit or filter their results.
  - <http://www.yahoo.com/>
  - <http://www.hotbot.com/>
- **Allow Only Trusted Search Results:** This is the safest option. This feature blocks result pages of all search engines except those that have N2H2 powered filtering.
  - <http://search.bess.net/>

Primary Secondary Distractions Exceptions Special Rules

Categories marked with a ★ are used in the standard Bess for Schools configuration.



## Exhibit L

**Center**

Customer Support: 206-336-1559 (Voice) | 206-336-1556 (FAX) | techsupport@n2h2.com  
 Emergency Support: 800-246-1174 (Voice) | 911@n2h2.com

Statistics | Authorized User | Local Override Database | Request Site Review  
 Cache Administration | System Maintenance | IP Control | Instruction Sets

**Options**

Filter Schedules  
 Filter Builder  
 Help ?

Filter Builder: Test\_WCSD  
 Page 3 of 6 [Previous](#) [Next](#)

**What Special Rules Do You Want Enabled?**

Block search engine results based on key words. ?  
 Block urls based on key words. ?  
 Block unfiltered search results. ?  
 Allow only trusted search results. ?

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE FILTER/SETTINGS  
 THAT WE COULD USE.

Center

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Statistics | Authorized User | Local Override Database | Request Site Review

Cache Administration | System Maintenance | IP Control | Instruction Sets

Options

Filter Schedules

Filter Builder

Help ?

### Filter Builder: Test\_WCSO

Page 4 of 6

Reset Previous Redraw Next

#### What Types of Content Do You Want Blocked?

**Black Text = Do Not Block -- Red Text = Block**

To change the status of a category click the check box.

When the page is redrawn the color of the text will change.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults Only ?          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hate / Discrimination ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illegal ?              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Porn Site ?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex ?                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Violence ?             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alcohol ?              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chat ?                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drugs ?                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free Email ?                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Free Pages ?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gambling ?             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tasteless / Gross ?    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profanity ?             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lingerie ?             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Message / Bulletin Boards ?       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nudity ?                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal Information ? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Cheating Info ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suicide / Murder ?      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tobacco ?              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weapons ?              |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auctions ?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Commerce ?              | <input type="checkbox"/> Games ?                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Search ?               | <input type="checkbox"/> Jokes and Humor ?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> News and Current Events ?         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personals ?            | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation / Entertainment ?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Information ?              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stocks ?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimsuits ?                        |  |

Center

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Statistics

Authorized User

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Request Site Review

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BuilderHelp  
?

## Filter Builder: Test\_WCSD

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Next

## What Exceptions Do You Want Made?

Green Text = Always Allow -- Black Text = Do not override block of these sites

To change the status of a category click the check box.

When the page is redrawn the color of the text will change.

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Kids Sites ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> History ? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical ?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderated ?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Text / Spoken Only ? |

Center

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Statistics Authorized User Local Override Database Request Site Review

Cache Administration System Maintenance IP Control Instruction Set

Options

Filter Schedules

Filter Builder

Help ?

## Filter Builder: Test\_WCSD

Filter Summary Actions:

Save and install as the default filter

### Page 6 of 6

#### Block Summary

|                       |                   |                   |                   |                  |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Adults Only           | <a href="#">?</a> | Alcohol           | <a href="#">?</a> | Chat             | <a href="#">?</a> |
| Hate / Discrimination | <a href="#">?</a> | Drugs             | <a href="#">?</a> | Free Pages       | <a href="#">?</a> |
| Gambling              | <a href="#">?</a> | Tasteless / Gross | <a href="#">?</a> | Illegal          | <a href="#">?</a> |
| Profanity             | <a href="#">?</a> | Lingerie          | <a href="#">?</a> | Nudity           | <a href="#">?</a> |
| Personal Information  | <a href="#">?</a> | Personals         | <a href="#">?</a> | Porn Site        | <a href="#">?</a> |
| School Cheating Info  | <a href="#">?</a> | Sex               | <a href="#">?</a> | Suicide / Murder | <a href="#">?</a> |
| Tobacco               | <a href="#">?</a> | Violence          | <a href="#">?</a> | Weapons          | <a href="#">?</a> |

#### Exceptions Summary

|           |                   |                |                   |         |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Education | <a href="#">?</a> | For Kids Sites | <a href="#">?</a> | History | <a href="#">?</a> |
| Medical   | <a href="#">?</a> | Moderated      | <a href="#">?</a> |         |                   |

Exhibit M

Customer Support: 206-336-1559 (Voice) | 206-336-1556 (FAX) | techsupport@n2h2.com  
 Emergency Support: 800-246-1174 (Voice) | 911@n2h2.com

Statistics | Authorized User | Local Override Database | Request Site Review  
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 Filter Builder  
 Help ?

Filter Builder: Test\_WCSD  
 Page 3 of 6 Previous Next

What Special Rules Do You Want Enabled?

- Block search engine results based on key words. ?
- Block urls based on key words. ?
- Block unfiltered search results. ?
- Allow only trusted search results. ?

*my copy*

PLEASE FILL IN THE SETTINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE AND SEND BACK TO ME.

*\* No special rules enabled.*

*My IP address is - 142.150.27.93*

*Thanks so much,  
- Lisa Murphy*

Center

Customer Support: 206-336-1559 (Voice) | 206-336-1556 (FAX) | techsupport@n2h2.com  
Emergency Support: 800-246-1174 (Voice) | 911@n2h2.com

Statistics | Authorized User | Local Override Database | Request Site Review

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Help ?

### Filter Builder: Test\_WCS

Page 4 of 6

Reset | Previous | Redraw | Next

#### What Types of Content Do You Want Blocked?

Black Text = Do Not Block -- Red Text = Block

To change the status of a category click the check box.

When the page is redrawn the color of the text will change.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults Only ?          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hate / Discrimination ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illegal ?      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Porn Site ?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex ?                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Violence ?     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol ?                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Chat ?                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drugs ?        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free Email ?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Free Pages ? NO                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gambling ?     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tasteless / Gross ?    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profanity ?             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lingerie ?     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Message / Bulletin Boards ?       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nudity ?                | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Information ?    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Cheating Info ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suicide / Murder ?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco ?                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weapons ?              |   |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Auctions ?             | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Commerce ?              | <input type="checkbox"/> Games ?                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Search ?               | <input type="checkbox"/> Jokes and Humor ?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> News and Current Events ? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personals ?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation / Entertainment ?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Information ?      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stocks ?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimsuits ?                        |  |

will this block media

Does this block too much?

at about + sites?! many blocked?

is this block information parents might need for school parents in the class?

Center

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Statistics Authorized User Local Override Database Request Site Review

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Filter Schedules

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Help ?

### Filter Builder: Test\_WCS

Page 5 of 6

Reset Previous Redraw Next

#### What Exceptions Do You Want Made?

Green Text = Always Allow -- Black Text = Do not override block of these sites

To change the status of a category click the check box.  
When the page is redrawn the color of the text will change.

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Kids Sites ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> History ? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical ?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderated ?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Text / Spoken Only ? |

*I don't know about this one, but quite often the text part would be useful.*

## Exhibit N

A handwritten note in blue ink that says "my copy" is circled with a blue line.**Categories I don't think should be filtered and why:**

Special Rules: Shouldn't be enabled because they overblock. Key words can be innocent but appear to be unacceptable. With blocking of certain categories (Profanity, Adults Only, etc.), that should catch most of the sites we don't want accessed.

Primary and Secondary sections:

Alcohol: Might contain good information

Free Email: Open already...

Message/Bulletin Boards: Open already...

Chat: If students are indeed monitored by staff, this shouldn't be a problem.

Free Pages: These often have good information. Blocking certain categories (Adults Only, etc.) should weed these.

Personal Information: I don't know about this one. If we block this category, will be keep appropriate people from ordering and entering data at times?

Tobacco: Might contain useful information

\*I think almost all the "Distractions" blocking categories could be left open, except maybe the Auctions site. I can't figure out how those sites would be useful, but I also can't think how they could be harmful.

Exceptions:

I believe all the Exceptions categories should be enabled, except maybe the Text/Spoken Only section. I don't know about that one, but maybe there would be useful text when the graphics were eliminated... I think Education, For Kids Sites, History, Medical, and Moderated should all be exceptions that are in effect. They might contain just the right information a student is looking for.



Exhibit O

Filter Control

http://bess-proxy.waterloo.k12.ia.us:2237/cgi-bin/s2237/filter-control/groupbuild.cgi

**Filter Control Center**

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Statistics | Authorized User | Local Override Database | Request Site Review  
Cache Administration | System Maintenance | IP Control | Instruction Sets

**Options**

- Filter Schedules
- Filter Builder
- Help ?

**Filter Builder: Test\_WCSD**

Page 3 of 6 Previous Next

**What Special Rules Do You Want Enabled?**

- Block search engine results based on key words. ?
- Block urls based on key words. ?
- Block unfiltered search results. ?
- Allow only trusted search results. ?

Center

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 Emergency Support: 800-246-1174 (Voice) | 911@n2h2.com

Statistics | Authorized User | Local Override Database | Request Site Review

Cache Administration | System Maintenance | IP Control | Instruction Sets

Options

Filter Schedules

Filter Builder

Help ?

Filter Builder: Test\_WCSO

Page 4 of 6

Reset | Previous | Redraw | Next

What Types of Content Do You Want Blocked?

Black Text = Do Not Block -- Red Text = Block

To change the status of a category click the check box.

When the page is redrawn the color of the text will change.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults Only ?          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hate / Discrimination ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illegal ?              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Porn Site ?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex ?                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Violence ?             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol ?                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chat ?                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drugs ?                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free Email ?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Free Pages ?                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gambling ?             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tasteless / Gross ?    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profanity ?             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lingerie ?             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Message / Bulletin Boards ?       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nudity ?                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal Information ? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Cheating Info ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suicide / Murder ?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco ?                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weapons ?              |   |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Auctions ?             | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Commerce ?              | <input type="checkbox"/> Games ?                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Search ?               | <input type="checkbox"/> Jokes and Humor ?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> News and Current Events ?         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personals ?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation / Entertainment ?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Information ?              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stocks ?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimsuits ?                        |  |

Control Center

Customer Support: 206-338-1559 (Voice) | 206-338-1556 (FAX) | techsupport@n2h2.com  
Emergency Support: 800-246-1174 (Voice) | 911@n2h2.com

Statistics | Authorized User | Local Override Database | Request Site Review

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Options

Filter Schedules

Filter Builder

Help ?

Back to Main Page

### Filter Builder: Test\_WCSD

Page 5 of 6

Reset Previous Redraw Next

#### What Exceptions Do You Want Made?

Green Text = Always Allow — Black Text = Do not override block of these sites

To change the status of a category click the check box.

When the page is redrawn the color of the text will change.

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Kids Sites ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> History ? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical ?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderated ?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Text / Spoken Only ? |

Exhibit P

Wednesday, August 8, 2001

Re: filter decision?

Page

**Subject: Re: filter decision?****Date: Wed, 08 Aug 2001 07:37:26 -0500****From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@waterloo.k12.ia.us>****To: chriskn@home.com****References: 1**

Chris,

Currently [REDACTED] is installing the XSTOP box and will be testing it the next few weeks. As far as the CIPA requirement, we are not worried about that. The reason we have a filter is that the Board told us to install a filter. If the Board didn't instruct us to install one, we could take the slow approach, but they feel that we need a filter in the district. I will let you know how the XSTOP test goes. Thanks for taking the time to investigate the filter companies.

[REDACTED]

Ken or Chris Murphy wrote:

Hi [REDACTED],

I am sorry I didn't get back to you before now about my research on filters. (I called last week, but you were on vacation.) I visited all the filter companies' booths at NECC in Chicago, including the N2H2 and the X-Stop booths. (The guy in the X-Stop booth knew your name when I mentioned I was from Waterloo.) After visiting with vendors and conducting research on my own, and aside from the fact that you already know how I feel about filters, I believe that if we must pay for a filter, either Bess or X-Stop would be acceptable as long as these things are possible:

1. The filter could be configured in several ways, including without keyword blocking.
2. There are override features that could be easily implemented when needed.

Wednesday, August 8, 2001

Re: filter decision?

Page: 2

Of course, it would also be very advantageous to be able to configure the filter differently for high school, middle school, and elementary school buildings. The X-Stop vendor told me his product had that capability, with different filtering levels assigned for different IP addresses.

One other thing I can't resist mentioning... Are you aware that CIPA compliance can be phased in, not requiring schools to install filters until July 1 of 2002? That allows school districts (like us) to file papers saying they are researching filtering options and undertaking actions to put in place an AUP that meets requirements of CIPA. With that form filed, school districts still can receive E-Rate and other contingent technology funds. Waiting until July of 2002 to install a filter could save the district a lot of money in one year, would give us more time to research, and who knows? Maybe even filters will improve and/or go down in price as competition increases.

Well, [REDACTED], if we do have a filter in place for this school year, I hope you will still let [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and me continue to be guinea pigs with our own passwords to override the filter when necessary. It sure worked well for me this past spring.

I know you are terribly busy, but if you could send me a short response I'd be grateful.

Thanks,

Chris Murphy  
chriskn@home.com

Exhibit Q

Monday, September 10, 2001

Page

You have attempted to access information that is blocked from viewing by X-Stop.

[Click Here](#)

If you feel this site is being blocked incorrectly...

[Click Here to Notify](#)

**X-STOP**™

Exhibit R

esday, September 26, 2001

naked-people

Page: 1

# 5000 Naked People Can't All Be Wrong

rotten.com

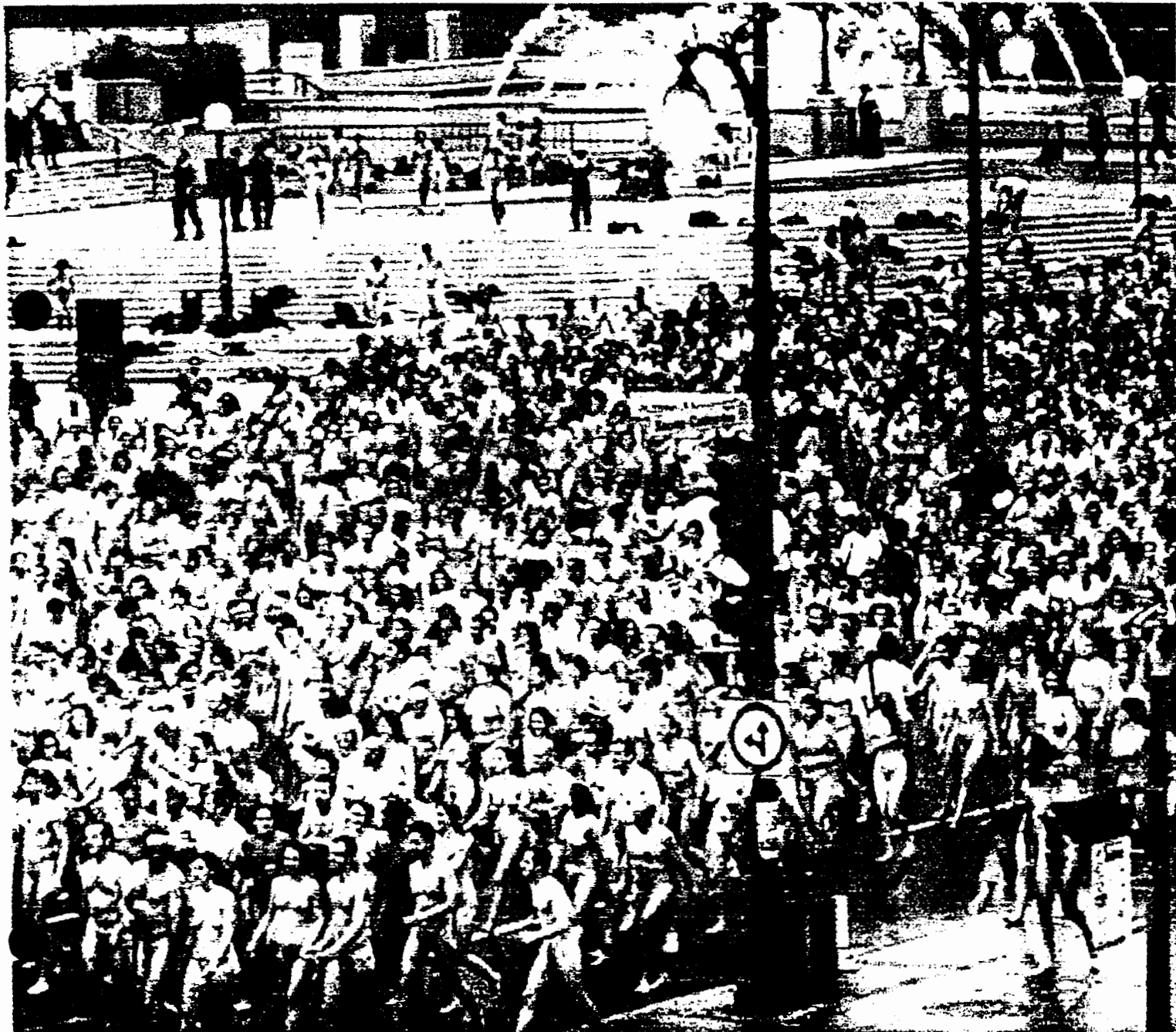


Exhibit S

Thursday, October 25, 2001

Welcome To Fatpig.com

Page: 1



**24 Hour Live Show**  
**Every Hour On The Hour!**  
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