

Jefferson County Public Library Internet Filtering

Q: What is filtering?

A: Filtering is a process that uses software designed to block Internet users from viewing pornography. Jefferson County Public Library uses the SmartFilter software. The definition of pornography used by SmartFilter follows:

This category includes URLs that contain materials that are intended to be sexually arousing or erotic, including fetish pages, animation, cartoons, stories and child pornography.

Q. Why does Jefferson County Public Library use filtering software?

A: In 2004 the Colorado General Assembly passed a law (Colorado statute 24-90-601) that requires public libraries to filter minor's access to sexual pictures on the Internet that are considered obscene, pornographic or "harmful to minors."

Q: Does filtering apply to all library users?

A: The law allows adults 17 and older to view unfiltered Internet sites. The law also allows parents to give their children permission to view unfiltered Internet sites.

Q. Can my child find medical information for school reports?

A. Yes. The law also requires that the filter not block scientifically or medically accurate information regarding sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest, sexually transmitted diseases or reproductive health.

Q. Does filtering always work?

A. Filtering software is not perfect security against explicit pictures, and as with other library resources, a child's use of the Internet is solely the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian.

Q: What can I do if I am able to access a site I feel should be blocked, or if I am unable to access a site that I believe has been blocked in error?

A: If you feel that there are sites viewed during a filtered session that should have been blocked, or if you feel that a site has been blocked in error, please fill out the Web Site Suggestion Form. JCPL will review the site to determine if it fits into the above categories and either add or remove the block.

Q: How is Jefferson County Public Library working to meet the law's requirement that children do not have access to unfiltered Internet sites?

A: In order to sign on the Internet from a library computer in the main library area, users must enter their library card number. The system automatically

checks to ensure the user's birth date adheres to the age requirement. Users under 17 must have signed consent from a parent or guardian to have unfiltered access. Computers in children's areas are close to the staff desk for monitoring. The default screen on children's area computers is the "Children's Pages" with resources and links to web sites selected by children's librarians as appropriate for this age group. The library also provides access to search engines that offer a filtering option.

Chat, e-mail and other online communication are not permitted on children's area computers.