

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO. 04-187

Approving the Library Director's Recommendations Regarding the Library's Internet Access Policies

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. The Multnomah County Library offers its patrons, regardless of age, access to valuable information via books, newspaper and magazine subscriptions, online databases and the Internet.
- b. The Multnomah County Library has always been firmly committed to protecting the intellectual freedom of all patrons by making available information and resources that are chosen to meet the broad spectrum of information needs, interests and values of a diverse community, ensuring access to Library resources regardless of patrons' economic levels, religious beliefs, age, race, or personal or physical characteristics, challenging censorship and supporting free expression, making meeting rooms available to the public, and training staff in the principles of intellectual freedom. In 1990, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners approved the Library's mission to protect intellectual freedom and endorsed the Library Bill of Rights, Resolution 90-139.
- c. Since 1996, the Multnomah County Library has managed Internet access based on three intersecting principles: (1) To offer access to information and resources that library customers of all ages want, need and ask for; (2) To ensure that Multnomah County libraries are safe and welcoming places for children; and (3) To uphold the right and responsibility of parents to make choices about what resources are appropriate for their children, based on their age, maturity and family values.
- d. The Library encourages parents to take an active role in guiding their children's use of Library resources. While Library staff are available to help parents and children access information, navigate resources and explain the various tools available to families when accessing the Internet from a Library computer, only parents know their children well enough to determine what type of Internet access is appropriate for each child.
- e. Since 1999, Multnomah County Library has offered its patrons a choice of filtered or unfiltered Internet access on all library computers. Tests by the library and by independent agencies have shown that the filtering software may help to block access to objectionable Internet sites. However, the software cannot block out all objectionable sites, and it does sometimes block useful material, including sites selected by library staff as suitable for children, teens and adults.
- f. An Internet Access Policy for Multnomah County libraries should respect the principles of intellectual freedom and affirm the right and responsibility of parents to make decisions for their own children. With respect to the use of filtering software, the library's policies should allow adults to make decisions for themselves and allow parents to make appropriate decisions for their own children and teens.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

1. Internet Access Policies at Multnomah County Libraries shall affirm the right and responsibility of parents to make decisions about Internet filtering for their own children.
2. Adult patrons, those 18 years-old and older, shall be able to choose filtered or unfiltered Internet access each time they use a Library computer.
3. Teen patrons, those between the ages of 13 through 17, shall have the choice of using filtered or unfiltered Internet access each time they use a Library computer, unless the patron's parent or legal guardian designates that the patron may use only filtered access.
4. Child patrons, those 12 years-old and younger, shall use filtered Internet access each time they use a Library computer, unless their parent or legal guardian designates that the patron may have a choice of filtered or unfiltered access.
5. Parents of newly registered child and teen patrons shall receive a mailed notification of their options for making decisions about their children's level of Internet access.
6. Computers in the children's areas of all Multnomah County libraries that are equipped with a special children's interface shall offer only filtered Internet access.
7. The Library shall record the reported number of sites that are blocked in error by its filtering software and record how many parents choose a different level of Internet access for their children than is provided by default, The Library Director shall report these statistics and an evaluation of the effectiveness of these policy changes back to the Board of Commissioners one year from implementation of this resolution.

ADOPTED this 16th day of December, 2004.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON


Diane M. Linn, Chair

REVIEWED:

AGNES SOWLE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 
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