

**Notes from “Developing Better Internet Use Policies”
MLA/MPLA Conference April 2011**

Definitions

- Policies – procedure, protocol, rules, board approved direction, road map for behavior in the library; Balance the resources of the library with the needs/wants of the user
- Internet Use Policy – ground rules for computer, access and availability, and what they can and cannot do

Problems we face with Internet Usage

- People looking at inappropriate material
- Whether or not to allow gaming
- Timing/Limits
- People using too much bandwidth
- Hovering
- Disputes between patrons
- Demands on staff time – helping with computer problems, etc.
- Skype in the library – noise issues

People looking at Inappropriate Material – what are our options?

- Filtering options – all, some (children’s)
- Security Management Software – monitor websites
- Useful Software – will warn people and they have to go to librarian to access site
- Tell them the law and reference it
- Physical orientation of the computers
- Do Nothing

Filtering All of the Computers

Pros	Cons
Makes your community happy	Makes your community unhappy
Takes burden off of staff and patrons	Gives community a false sense of security
Keeps people from accidentally getting into dangerous sites	Become the library police
Protects technology investments	Politically charged issue
	Have filter, but still doesn’t work
	Can be expensive

Disputes between patrons – What are our options?

- Kick them all off the computers
- Can’t hover/irritate/have to be somewhere else when not on computer
- Time Management Software
- Use reservation system
- Make exceptions for testing, etc.

- Use laptop for testing, etc, but patron has to tell library up front
- Have 15 minute computers

Time Management Software

Pros	Cons
Free up staff time	Expensive
Can't argue w/clock	Have to have another system for non-cardholders
Have better statistics which may lead to better funding	Patrons can cheat the system
Use it as a reservation system	Not "patron" proof – people sometimes don't believe or read the you only have 5 minutes left messages
Will shut down the computers at the end of the day	Complicated to set up
Make library card THE card to have	Might have an annual fee
People pay their fines in order to use computers	Limits flexibility