



## **ALA FILTERING STATEMENT**

The use of Internet filters to block constitutionally protected speech, including content on social networking and gaming sites, compromises First Amendment freedoms and the core values of librarianship. Internet safety for children and adults is best addressed through educational programs that teach people how to find and evaluate information.

Research demonstrates that filters consistently both over- and underblock the content they claim to filter. Filters often block adults and minors from accessing a wide range of constitutionally protected speech. Content filters are unreliable because computer code and algorithms are still unable to adequately interpret, assess, and categorize the complexities of human communication, whether expressed in text or in image.

"The negative effects of content filters on Internet access in public libraries and schools are demonstrable and documented. Consequently, consistent with previous resolutions, the American Library Association cannot recommend filtering. However, the ALA recognizes that local libraries and schools are governed by local decision makers and local considerations and often must rely on federal or state funding for computers and internet access. Because adults and, to a lesser degree minors, have First Amendment rights, libraries and schools that choose to use content filters should implement policies and procedures that mitigate the negative effects of filtering to the greatest extent possible. The process should encourage and allow users to ask for filtered websites and content to be unblocked, with minimal delay and due respect for user privacy."

### **Additional Resources on Internet Filtering, Digital Rights, and Online Safety**

American Library Association/Association for Library Service to Children, [Great Web Sites for Kids](#)

#### [American Civil Liberties Union](#)

*"The ACLU believes in an uncensored Internet, a vast free-speech zone deserving at least as much First Amendment protection as that afforded to traditional media such as books, newspapers, and magazines."*

- [Governor Mifflin School District And Filtering Of LGBT Online Content](#)
- [Pflag v. Camdenton R-III School District](#)
- [Franks v. Metropolitan Board of Public Education](#)

#### [ConnectSafely](#)

*"ConnectSafely.org is a Silicon Valley, Calif.-based nonprofit organization dedicated to educating users of connected technology about safety, privacy, and security. Here you'll find research-based safety tips, parents' guidebooks, advice, news, and commentary on all aspects of tech use and policy."*



[Electronic Frontier Foundation](#)

*"EFF defends the Internet as a platform for free speech, and believes that when you go online, your rights should come with you."*

- [Content Blocking](#)
- [How to Circumvent Online Censorship](#)

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