



London Abused
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Providing counselling, advocacy and support for abused women.

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His Worship Mayor Joe Fontana
Members of London City Council

The London Abused Women's Centre, Men Against Sexual Trafficking and Stop Porn Culture appreciate the support given to our presentation and recommendations by the Community and Neighbourhoods Committee at its August 16th meeting. As you are aware, a unanimous motion was passed recommending the London Public Library Board install filters against pornography on its computers.

We are aware that the London Public Library has its own authority to make decisions on such matters. However, we are also aware that London City Council appoints citizens and council members to the London Public Library Board and also provides funding to the Library Board. As such, a decision of Council to support the recommendation of the Community and Neighbourhoods Committee will carry great weight. In addition, I would point out that Councillor Matt Brown, a member of the Library Board, supported the recommendation of the Community and Neighbourhoods Committee at its meeting.

We were pleased to learn over the weekend of August 20th that the Windsor Public Library Board at its August 19th meeting, under the leadership of library board member and City Councillor Al Maghnieh, passed a motion directing its administration to filter its computers against pornography.

In email correspondence with Councillor Maghnieh over the weekend he wrote, "I issued a directive to administration that was supported by the board. I didn't find the need to study and so on...call it for what it is. Libraries are safe havens and places for literacy and creativity. Best of luck with your endeavours stopping this nonsense." I have attached two articles from the Windsor Star detailing this story. I am attaching these stories with the permission of the Windsor Star.

As was mentioned in our presentation, 25 American states have internet filtering laws that apply to public schools or libraries. Legislators were convinced that filters effectively protect minors from harmful, web-borne internet content and along with the public have decided the protection for children outweigh any concern that filters may pose a threat to free speech or open access.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the safety of women and children in this community. We also look forward to working with the London Public Library Board in seeking solutions to this issue.

Sincerely,
Megan Walker

Megan Walker
Executive Director
London Abused Women's Centre
On behalf of Stop Porn Culture and Men Against Sexual Trafficking

Library weighs Internet porn filter

By Vincent McDermott, The Windsor Star August 19, 2011

The Windsor Public Library board is considering installing filters that would block explicit online content on library computers, after a flurry of complaints about a lack of protection brought the matter to the board's Thursday meeting.

"We discussed the topic of Internet filters, because we've received complaints from some people who have seen other patrons viewing pornography and other offensive materials on library computers," said Coun. Al Maghnieh, who is also the chairman of the library board. "At a public library, a place that attracts families and promotes literacy and learning, that's just not acceptable."

Computers at the Windsor Public Library are only capable of recording the browsing history of a user once they have logged in with their library card. This allows staff to alert police if an individual views participates in illegal activity online.

However, the library does not have any software that is designed to block access to websites. "Libraries are increasingly shifting towards digital technology," said Maghnieh.

"We have to start reviewing and updating our guidelines and user policies for online use."

At the library's central branch on Ouellette Avenue, patrons using the computers were happy to hear that the library might install filtering software on the computers.

"I'm surprised that they didn't have it before," said Jeff Gilchrist, a library patron who was using the Internet for job hunting on Thursday evening. "I see similar filters on Via Rail and I know other libraries and businesses use them. So why not Windsor?"

Carmen Cloutier, another library patron, said she was surprised that the library already did not have filtering software.

"It is a good idea, I hope they start using those programs," she said. "If it will block out porn and those kinds of sites, I don't have any problems with it."

A report on the library's terms of use agreements and a summary of what other library boards have done is due in mid-September, said Maghnieh.

However, there are concerns on whether or not blocking Internet sites on public computers would be a freedom of speech violation. It's an argument that has been raised in other library boards in North America.

When a 71-year-old man in London, Ont., was caught viewing child pornography in 2009, the incident ignited a heated debate about whether or not public computers should be equipped to filter out lewd content.

In the United States, the issue was brought to the Supreme Court in 2003, which ruled that libraries had the authority to block websites, images or videos that may be seen as inappropriate.

"We would have to review and define what exactly porn is and see if we can limit it," said Maghnieh.

"Windsor taxes are not meant to fund the browsing of pornography on public computers."

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Read more:

<http://www.windsorstar.com/news/Library+weighs+Internet+porn+filter/5276109/story.html#ixz1ViDgciWE>

Library internet porn filter to go ahead

By The Windsor Star, August 20, 2011

Read more:

<http://www.windsorstar.com/sports/Library+internet+porn+filter+ahead/5282423/story.html#ixz1ViEBrdZf>

WINDSOR -- Public porn surfers will now have to find a new place to browse their titillating online material.

City Coun. Al Maghnieh said he has received a flurry of calls from concerned residents who support installing filters on library computers to block explicit online content.

"There have been opinions that this will be censorship but I disagree and the majority of the public disagrees," Maghnieh said Friday.

"Just like the stuff is blocked at schools, universities and workplaces, it should be the same for libraries and if this is the issue of rights then the rights of the majority is really infringed upon if this continues to happen.

"We will start implementing the changes right away and then at the board level we will do a formal motion to cease this sort of access to pornographic material."

Maghnieh said he was surprised to learn the issue had not been addressed earlier.

"This sort of material will not be present in any of our library systems and we'll be sure to stay on top of things like this," Maghnieh said.

"If anybody has any concerns or issues they can always get in contact with me directly."

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