



January 23, 2012

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Update Re: London Public Library Internet Service Policy, Including Filtering

This submission to London City Council, from London Public Library (LPL), is to provide City Council with an update regarding the London Public Library *Internet Service Policy* and filtering practices. The update is provided in the context of the following recommendation and specifically to sections (a) and (b) of the recommendation as follows:

"That the following actions be taken with respect to the request dated August 4, 2011 submitted by the London Abused Women's Centre, Men Against Sexual Trafficking (MAST) and Stop Porn Culture, with respect to the leasing or renting of city-funded space and the current internet service policy of the London Public Library:

- (a) the request to establish a policy to prohibit any directly or indirectly City-funded boards, commissions and/or departments from leasing or renting space to any pornography industry-sponsored events BE REFERRED to the Civic Administration to report back to the Community and Neighbourhoods Committee (CNC) with a proposed policy, including information pertaining to the implications of implementing that policy;*
- (b) the following recommendation BE REFERRED to the London Public Library Board:*

The City of London Municipal Council recommends that the London Public Library Board undertake an immediate review of its Internet Service Policy and consider the following amendments:

- (i) security filters on public computers to prohibit access to pornography;*
- (ii) implement a policy related to the use of wireless internet so that users cannot be anonymous ..."*

2011 LPL Internet Service Policy Review Update

London Public Library takes very seriously its responsibility of creating balance between the rights of individuals to access a wide range of information, thought, belief, opinion and expression through library services and resources with the rights of users and staff working in a public environment. In August 2011, the Library Board provided information to City Council regarding the LPL Internet Service Policy and its filtering practices. It also advised Council that:

- LPL does ongoing review and an annual evaluation of its policy and its application; and
- The matter referred to the Board by Council by the above motion of Council would be considered during the Board's 2011 *LPL Internet Service Policy Review*.

At its meetings of November and December 2011, the Library Board undertook its annual *Internet Service Policy Review*. It also considered the matter of LPL's wireless service from the service and business perspectives and in alignment with the *LPL Internet Service Policy*.

At its November meeting, the Board affirmed by motion (Library Board Motion L11/89.4):

- Assumptions and guiding principles which serve as the foundation for the London Public Library *Internet Service Policy*; and
- The foundational principle stated in its *Charter of Library Use*, that: London Public Library endeavours to provide a welcoming and safe environment for the enjoyment of the community and staff, so that all may enjoy the benefits of the Library.

The Library Board also made specific changes to its policy and practices as provided below.

User Responsibilities

In respect of the range of sensibilities and viewpoints of its diverse clientele and consistent with its *Internet Service Policy*, LPL endeavours to minimize the opportunity for unintentional exposure by people using library space to content being accessed by another library user. LPL has proactively implemented a combination of measures such as Acceptable Use Statements for users and measures such as privacy film on computer monitors, placement of computers, etc. in an effort to minimize sightlines to computer screens.

As an outcome of the 2011 *Internet Service Policy Review*, the policy language has been made clearer and more specific in order to ensure that users and staff can understand and act according to Library expectations regarding acceptable use in library space. The statement of "User Responsibility" in the policy has been revised (Library Board Motion L11/100.8) to state:

*Users **are required** to respect the rights of others when accessing Internet sites in library space. Users must be aware that computers and other devices are being used in public areas shared by people of all ages and sensibilities. Some content is age*

inappropriate for children. Some content may be offensive, objectionable and/or intimidating to other Library patrons and/or staff.

In seeking alternate ways to strengthen the language about user responsibilities, the Library also reviewed language in the policy regarding illegal activity. The recent public response and media coverage on the LPL *Internet Service Policy*, demonstrates that it is not generally understood that the Library policy prohibits access to obscenity and child pornography. In order to clarify and reinforce the responsibilities of users, within the legal context, an additional change in language was made as follows with changes and additions shown in bold text (Library Board Motion L11/100.8):

*Users are responsible for determining the legality of any sites they access. Users are subject to federal, provincial and municipal legislation regulating Internet use and must not use the Internet for illegal purposes including copyright violation, obscenity, child pornography, sedition and the incitement of hate. For example, the **Criminal Code of Canada prohibits possession, public exhibition and the exposure to public view of child pornography and obscenity (which is defined as the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely crime, horror, cruelty and violence)**. The use of the Library's Internet services for **these and any other illegal purposes is prohibited.***

Filtering

LPL has had a combination of filtered and unfiltered computers across the system and at each location for over a decade. As part of its practice, LPL has blocked access to URLs which depict pornography on computers which are filtered. As an outcome of the 2011 *LPL Internet Service Policy Review*, LPL will also block access to URLs which depict or promote extreme, dangerous or disturbing behaviours or activities such as intense violence, torture and mutilation, on the computers being filtered in accordance with LPL policy (Library Board Motion L11/100.09): These include the following categories of computers:

- Computers specifically designated for use by children and/or teens, such as Homework Centres;
- Computers in spaces specifically designed for use by children and/or teens;
- Computers designated for specific functions, such as the Employment Resource Centre computers; and
- Computers filtered in cases in which all other methods of due diligence regarding the reasonable protection of children/teens cannot be achieved.

Wireless Authentication

As part of its review of the *LPL Internet Service Policy*, LPL stated that this policy and other associated policies, such as the *Charter of Library Use*, apply to the use of LPL's wireless

service. This means that user responsibilities defined above also apply to people using the wireless service.

Wireless access through personal devices is available throughout the library system and has become part of LPL's mainstream computer access/usage. From a customer service perspective, the heavy use of both the Internet bandwidth and the wireless network needs to be monitored and managed in order to ensure that LPL provides equitable access to finite library resources for all library users; and facilitates responsible use of library resources by the public. From an organizational and financial perspective, the recent exponential growth in use requires that LPL develop and implement service solutions, implement effective processes, and optimize resource allocation to manage resources within the funding envelope. Thus, effective March 1, 2012, LPL will introduce "patron authentication" on the LPL wireless network. (Library Board Motions L11/89 and L11/100.7).

In summary: The 2011 *LPL Internet Service Policy Review* has resulted in an affirmation of the assumptions and guiding principles upon which the policy is based, an extension of the policy to cover LPL's wireless service, strengthening of language to clarify user responsibilities, and blocking of extreme content on filtered computers.

To confirm: London Public Library takes very seriously its responsibility of achieving balance between the rights of individuals to access a wide range of information, thought, belief, opinion and expression through library services and resources with the rights of users and staff to work in a public environment.

Please contact Susanna Hubbard Krimmer or me, if further information is required.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Morgan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Josh Morgan
Chair, London Public Library Board

cc: C. Saunders, City Clerk