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Providing counselling, advocacy and support for abused women.

November 7, 2011

Chair and Members
London Public Library Board

Re: Removing access to pornography at the London Public Library

The London Abused Women's Centre, Stop Porn Culture, Men Against Sex Trafficking and the London and Area Anti-Trafficking Committee recommend the following in response to our concerns about access to pornography at the London Public Library:

- **The London Public Library Board immediately revisit its wireless usage policy and develop a policy that requires users to log in with library authentication**
- **The London Public Library Board take a stand against pornography viewing on all LPL computers by establishing a porn free policy and/or installing filters on ALL computers**

Our recommendations are supported by the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, London Police Services and Merrymount Children's Centre. We are further supported by a unanimous decision of London City Council.

We want to draw your attention to the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) passed in 25 U.S. States. CIPA requires that as a condition of receiving government funding, Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools and all publicly funded libraries, must provide "a technology protection measure with respect to any of its computers with Internet access that protects against access through such computers to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors..." Such a technology protection measure must be employed "during any use of such computers by minors."

Under the legislation, all internet access must be filtered for minors and adults. The legislation is clear that child pornography, information harmful to minors, and obscene materials are to be filtered or blocked.

- Obscene (for definition, see the case of [Miller v. California](#) 1973)
- Child Pornography (for definition, see 18 U.S.C. 2256)
- Harmful to Minors (for definition, see below)

CIPA defines "Harmful to minors" as:

Any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that – (i) taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion; (ii) depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and (iii) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific

value as to minors" (Secs. 1703(b)(2), 20 U.S.C. sec 3601(a)(5)(F) as added by CIPA sec 1711, 20 U.S.C. sec 9134(b)(f)(7)(B) as added by CIPA sec 1712(a), and 147 U.S.C. sec. 254(h)(c)(G) as added by CIPA sec. 1721(a)).

As previously provided during our presentation to the Board in October, Section 163, clause 8 of the Canadian Criminal Code provides Canada's legal definition of "obscenity" as follows:

For the purposes of this Act, any publication a dominant characteristic of which is the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely crime, horror, cruelty and violence, shall be deemed to be obscene.

Our presentation clearly demonstrated that mainstream pornography, accessible at the London Public Library, meets this definition.

As you are aware, our goal is to prevent access to pornography on the London Public Library computers. We have no interest in preventing anyone from accessing legitimate and legal information. To that end, we recommended that a porn free computer policy be developed AND/OR filters installed.

We recommend the development of a porn free computer policy that clearly outlines pornography viewing is prohibited from library computers and those breaching the policy will be removed from the premises and have their library privileges removed.

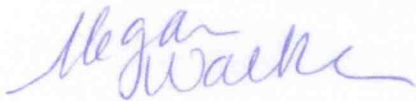
With a clear policy banning porn from its computers, if the London Public Library Board moves towards the installation of filters, it could then provide a code to adult users to disable the filter if they are prevented from doing legitimate, legal research. This has proven to be effective in the U.S.

The London Abused Women's Centre has received numerous complaints from library patrons about unintended viewing of pornography on the computers. Women and children viewing this material can be triggered and/or harmed by this experience. One woman identified the man sitting next to her was masturbating while watching pornography. She did not report this to the library as she was "in shock and just wanted out of there." The London Public Library should not be seen as a masturbation centre.

We trust you will consult with London Police Services regarding our recommendation to require authentication to log onto the wireless network. This recommendation came directly by the police as they advised there are some wireless users downloading child pornography through the library's network and there is no way for police to track them.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations. Please contact me at the conclusion of your debate to advise me of the outcome. I can be reached at mwalker@lawc.on.ca.

Sincerely,



Megan Walker
Executive Director
London Abused Women's Centre