

September 6, 2011

Susanna Hubbard Krimmer
Chief Executive Officer
London Public Library
251 Dundas Street
London, Ontario N6A 6H9

Dear Susanna:

We understand that London City Council has asked your Board of Directors to review your library's Internet service policy, and part of this process includes community consultation. Please accept this letter as input from the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries.

Our position on Internet filtering is consistent with Internet access policies of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) and the Canadian Library Association (CLA). We believe public libraries have a basic responsibility to uphold Canada's Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable.

The Internet has many wonderful resources for children, but it is unregulated. Since there is no foolproof way to eliminate inappropriate material, public libraries are taking special measures to instruct and protect children in their use of the Internet. Most public library boards have approved policies and procedures on Internet access for children.

While filters can have a place in a broader program to protect children from inappropriate materials, they do not guarantee that all inappropriate material will be blocked. Filters can also block useful material. Therefore they should be considered as only one element in the library's program to provide Internet service in a safe and welcoming environment.

With the features available today on wireless devices such as cell phones and with the variety of other public places without filters, controlling a child's access to the Internet has become a complex societal issue. We believe the best and most reliable filter is a child's parent or guardian.

Respectfully submitted,



David Allen
Chief Executive Officer