

public comments:  
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### **Internet Use Policy considerations:**

The proposed Internet Use Policy, as stated in the documents for this meeting, includes:

*"The Library does not monitor and has no control over the information on the Internet."*

However, it also states:

*"Internet filtering software is utilized by the Library and is designed to block content harmful to minors."*

Regardless of the filtering software decisions reached, the act of filtering requires monitoring. Without monitoring, there is no way to know what should be filtered. This section should be reworded before it is approved, otherwise the Internet Use Policy will be in conflict with itself.

### **Outsourcing Cultural Values to Software Corporations and AI:**

By relying on automated filtering, the library is allowing an outside entity to determine what is or is not most harmful. CIPA only focuses on sex (and excretory bodily functions), something required for all of us to be alive.

Filters give the false sense of security that if one harmful thing is blocked (I am not at all arguing for allowing children to see material harmful to them in NBPL), other harmful information will be blocked as well. This is not the case. For example, the stopgap filter currently in place does not block recruitment for violent extremist groups. Stormfront, and other pro neonazi websites are still freely available, as are those for violent international groups.

I am not saying these need to be blocked, I am just saying that our culture has some strange priorities when a nude form is viewed as harmful, but advocating for violent extremism is not. Implementing AI (software) to reinforce this moral stance removes the nuance of human interpretation, and unfortunately, as a result, it means the library reinforces this moral stance as well (whether intended or not).

### **Pursuing Filtering Software going forward:**

- Decisions should be honest and transparent
- Factor the costs of a filter/blocker along with benefits:
  - *Monetary* - cost of software vs cost of non-telecommunications based E-Rate discount spending by NBPL (CIPA is used as the justification for filtering in Board Mtg docs; filtering is not required unless a library receives E-rate discounts aside from telecommunications funding)
  - *Chilling effect* - filtering inevitably blocks things mistakenly; poor messaging about filtering may lead to abandoned research (let people know sites can be unblocked for research as required by CIPA, and inform authorized staff how and when to do this)
  - *Reputation and perception of bias* - libraries are bastions for the First Amendment but filters may unbalance the neutral stance they take in providing avenues for unfettered research
- Follow best practices regarding filters in library (proper signage/messaging about filters, etc.)
- Track instances of customer complaints, filter workarounds, and other possible metrics to evaluate and reevaluate implementation of filters going forward -- must justify continued implementation of a filter after so many successful years as a Star Rated library without filtering adult computers

Libraries are not beholden to profits like Facebook, Instagram, or other censored platforms. Some ideas in libraries will offend people. Libraries must be careful when deciding what is harmful content. As a government entity they must err on the side of the First Amendment, not what causes the least friction.

### How Software, AI, and algorithms fail us (Google in this instance):

An excerpt from *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* presented by Safiya Noble in UCI Department of Informatics on 12/08/2017:

"...the last piece I want to give you and then we'll open up for some conversation. Here we have the case of Dylan "Storm" Roof. Many of you know Dylan Roof was a 21 year-old white nationalist who opened fire on unsuspecting African-American Christian worshippers at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in the summer of 2015. I won't go a lot into the backstory, but this is a site that's not chosen in vain. This has been kind of a site of radical resistance of white supremacy and of struggle. A site for the organizing and struggle for civil rights and human rights and recognition of African-American people, black people in the United States.

And so Dylan Roof, after the murders—immediately many researchers are turning to the Web and trying to make sense of what's happening here. And I wrote a whole chapter in the book about about this phenomenon. Within about twenty-four hours, someone on Twitter found Dylan Roof's kind of online diary at "The Last Rhodesian," and this was the part of his diary that jumped out to me. He says,

*"The event that truly awakened me was the Trayvon Martin case. I kept hearing and seeing his name, and eventually I decided to look him up. I read the Wikipedia article and right away I was unable to understand what the big deal was. It was obvious that Zimmerman was in the right. But more importantly this prompted me to type in the words "black on White crime" into Google, and I have never been the same since that day. The first website I came to was the Council of Conservative Citizens. There were pages upon pages of these brutal black on White murders. I was in disbelief. At this moment I realized that something was very wrong. How could the news be blowing up the Trayvon Martin case while hundreds of these black on White murders got ignored?"*

*From this point I researched deeper and found out what was happening in Europe. I saw that the same things were happening in England and France, and in all the other Western European countries. Again I found myself in disbelief. As an American we are taught to accept living in the melting pot, and black and other minorities have just as much right to be here as we do, since we are all immigrants. But Europe is the homeland of White people, and in many ways the situation is even worse there. From here I found out about the Jewish problem and other issues facing our race, and I can say today that I am completely racially aware."*

Dylan Roof Manifesto, 2015 at [www.lastrhodesian.com](http://www.lastrhodesian.com)

Retrieved Jan 21, 2019 from:

<http://opentranscripts.org/transcript/algorithms-oppression-search-engines-reinforce-racism/>

### Conclusion

Each step towards automation regarding information control removes nuance. It upholds the values of some and crushes those of others. Dancing was illegal in many parts of Southern California less than a century ago. Imagine if YouTube existed then, and how different YouTube would be if dancing was banned on it. Who knows what the future holds; I hope it's not a future of violent extremism and shame.