

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM STATEMENTS

CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

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www.cilip.org.uk

(CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals was formed in April 2002 following the unification of the Institute of Information Scientists and the Library Association.)

The statement below was produced by the Library Association which ceased to exist in 2002.

The Use of Filtering Software in Libraries

Policy Statement

The Library Association does not endorse the use of filtering software in libraries. The use of such software is inconsistent with the commitment or duty of a library or information service to provide all publicly available information in which its users claim legitimate interest. Access to information should not be restricted except as required by law.

Filtering software

Filtering is the term used to describe the use of software that restricts or blocks access to material on the Internet. Such software is intended to prevent access to undesirable and extreme material.

Many library or information services are providing their users with access to the Internet. The provision of unrestricted Internet access raises a number of concerns, for example, that a library user may access illegal material or that a child may see inappropriate material in a library. The use of filtering software may be considered as one way of addressing these concerns. The consequence of the use of filtering technologies is, however, to deny users reasonable access to information in digitised form.

Intellectual Freedom and the right of access to information

The Library Association is committed to the widest possible freedom in the dissemination of information. For a democratic, civilised society to thrive, its citizens should have the right to access all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity. Intellectual freedom and freedom of expression are necessary conditions for freedom of access to information.

The function of a library or information service is to provide, as far as resources allow, all publicly available information in which its users claim legitimate interest. Such provisions should be regardless of format and include factual and fiction material.

