

Memorandum

TO: San José Library Commission

FROM: Jane E. Light, Director
Library Department

**SUBJECT: REPORT ON STAFF TESTING
OF INTERNET FILTERING
SOFTWARE**

DATE: February 13, 2008

Approved

Date

Attached is a report containing the results of staff testing of Internet filtering software. This work was undertaken as part of a workplan approved by the Council Rules committee to evaluate the policy options regarding library Internet access and filtering that access. The purpose of the research was to learn the degree to which software filters are presently able to block child pornography or obscenity and images that are harmful to minors and not block other images and sites. No recently published studies were found, so this research could provide up to date information.

In summary, our testing confirmed earlier published results that have concluded 15-20% of keyword searches will be subject to over-blocking and 15-20% of keyword searches will be under-blocked. However, our testing did reveal new information about the ability of content software to handle content not accessed through keyword searches or direct URL entry. All the software we tested was ineffective in filtering and blocking other, newer types of Internet uses, specifically image search engine results, RSS feeds, and email attachments.

Sarah Houghton-Jan, the new Digital Futures Manager, coordinated the research, compiled and analyzed the results and wrote the report and will be at your February meeting to present the report and answer any questions you may have.

JANE LIGHT
Director, Library Department

