

Online Filtering Case Study 1 – May 2007

Parramatta City Council Library

Parramatta City Council (PCC) is Australia's 6th biggest CBD and is situated in the heart of Western Sydney. PCC services a population of approximately 151, 860 people the average age of 35.8 years. PCC has 720 staff and a computer network that supports 670 computers (this includes 175 notebook computers) – 60 of which are publicly accessible via the public library service. The networking configuration employed by PCC is Windows ActiveDirectory which is fairly typical of most local government networks, which vary only in size and application of policy.

To meet the complex nature of computer usage and network security requirements PCC employs a multi-platform approach to online filtering. This approach involves the deployment of a software product that collectively monitors and filters email, Spam, viruses and site appropriate web browsing. The product currently used at PCC is *SurfControl (This software usually costs Councils approximately \$10,000 - \$20,000 pa and this amount would vary dependent on the number of PC's on the network). This product also provides PCC's network with software updates every 2 hours, in particular to prevent attack by computer viruses. SurfControl also allows targeted filtering by individual computer, IP address, and group or user type. Filtering software for Councils must be robust, meet international standards, be continually updated and backed by research and development to ensure viruses, hackers and other inappropriate customer behaviour is limited.

PCC is able to filter, monitor and report on public access computer usage. Child specific computers are filtered and monitored closely via electronic means and staff. PCC also has an adopted Internet usage policy and guidelines. When joining the library, children aged between 12 and 18 must have the signed approval of a parent or guardian before accessing the Internet. Children under the age of 12 must have an adult with them to book the PC and sit with the child at the public internet terminal.

* Please note that there are several other products that offer this level of sophistication of surveillance and monitoring, for example WebSense

Sources:

- Roger Henshaw – Library Consultant and former PCC Manager, Information & Library Services
- Doug Frater – PCC Service Manager – Information Systems
- http://www.parracity.nsw.gov.au/culture_and_leisure/library/



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