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Children's Internet Protection Act

FCC Consumer Facts

Background

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is a federal law enacted by Congress in December 2000 to address concerns about access to offensive content over the Internet on school and library computers. CIPA imposes certain types of requirements on any school or library that receives funding support for Internet access or internal connections from the "E-rate" program – a program that makes certain technology more affordable for eligible schools and libraries. In early 2001, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued rules implementing CIPA.

What CIPA Requires

- Schools and libraries subject to CIPA may not receive the discounts offered by the E-Rate program unless they certify that they have an Internet safety policy and technology protection measures in place. An Internet safety policy must include technology protection measures to block or filter Internet access to pictures that: (a) are obscene, (b) are child pornography, or (c) are harmful to minors, for computers that are accessed by minors.
- Schools subject to CIPA are required to adopt and enforce a policy to monitor online activities of minors; and
- Schools and libraries subject to CIPA are required to adopt and implement a policy addressing: (a) access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet; (b) the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications; (c) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online; (d) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and (e) restricting minors' access to materials harmful to them.

Schools and libraries are required to certify that they have their safety policies and technology in place before receiving E-rate funding.

- CIPA does not affect E-rate funding for schools and libraries receiving discounts only for

telecommunications, such as telephone service.

- An authorized person may disable the blocking or filtering measure during any use by an adult to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.
- CIPA does not require the tracking of Internet use by minors or adults.

Where to Go for Additional Information and Assistance

For further information on CIPA or to apply for Universal Service, contact the Universal Service Administrative Company's (USAC) Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) at www.sl.universalservice.org. SLD also operates a client service bureau to answer questions at 1-888-203-8100 or via e-mail through the SLD Web site.

For this or any other consumer publication in an accessible format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print, or audio) please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an e-mail to FCC504@fcc.gov.

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts>.

This fact sheet is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceeding or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.

01/12/06



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last reviewed/updated on 01/13/06

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