

Information Handout  
on the  
N2H2 Content Filter and Control Center  
used by the  
Maine School and Library Network (MSLN)

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Prepared by the MSLN Circuit Rider Program  
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## MSLN Content Filter

### What content filter is MSLN using?

MSLN is using N2H2's Bess filter with a web-based local control interface that allows each school and library to customize the filter to the school or library's specifications. You can just login to the web site at: <http://filter.msln.net> to manage the filter for your library. The N2H2 filter works by IP and IP range and has the ability to customize block and allow lists as well as create Overrides, Custom Categories, etc. **You also can Block and allow file types (e.g. Mp3).**

### What if my library uses private IP addressing or a firewall?

It is possible to set up a firewall to use MSLN addressing for the filter. A library might have to increase their public IP ranges with MSLN but that would accomplish what they want.

It is also possible to set up 1 to 1 NAT where a library or school uses public addressing at the firewall and NAT behind it. The site will need 1 public address for each PC and the firewall setup so that when it makes a request out, it sends the public address and when it receives a request for that address it sends it to the NATted PC. The PCs need be hard coded with the private address, and the firewall should be setup to do 1 to 1 NAT. MSLN already has a number of schools using the filter this way.

### How do I access the Control center for my library or school?

Call or email the MSLN Help Desk to request to manage the content filter locally MSLN Help Desk at 1-888-367-6756

E-mail to [msln@maine.edu](mailto:msln@maine.edu)

You need to know:

- Your NM (Network Management) ID
- The name(s) of your school(s) or library

The control of the filter is designated to the site's tech contact person on record. They will choose a username and password to login to the filter's Control Center.

You can then go to: <https://filter.msln.net/controlcenter> and login and begin to manage your site's filtering.

### How can I learn how to use the Control Center?

The MSLN Circuit Riders are developing an online tutorial and a PowerPoint presentation that will be available via the Circuit Rider web site. The Circuit Riders can also meet with you for individual instruction or provide instruction if you would like to put a small group together. You also can always call the MSLN Help Desk for assistance at 1-888-367-6756.

### What choices can I make in the Bess (N2H2) filter that MSLN is using?

Two options set up by Bess

1. No Filter
2. Minimum Filter

## With local administration you can:

- Create your own custom filters, block and allow lists
- Copy the Minimum Filter and "customize" it to match your Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and your directors/trustees/governing group's interpretation of CIPA ruling/law.
- Unblock sites that you believe are "mis-filtered"
- Block specific sites (music downloads, chat room as per your AUP)
- Customize filtered site announcement page
- Create various override accounts (one for adult patrons; one for children's computers, staff, etc.)
- Create blocks and exceptions by "keywords" and also by "file type".

## What is filtered when using the Minimum Filter?

Blocked sites that fall under these categories are filtered:

- Adults Only
- Hate Discrimination
- Illegal
- Nudity
- P2P/Loophole
- Pornography
- Sex
- Violence

Once you reviewed the categories and types of websites blocked you can customize the filter for your library or school. For example, a library may choose not to filter websites categorized as **Sex** because those sites contain descriptions or depictions of sexual acts, but **specifically those without the intent to arouse (sites which contain material intended to arouse fall under the Pornography category)**. Sexual merchandise and fetish sites fall under the Sex category.

Examples would be:

<http://www.handbooktogreatsex.com/> Overview of online book on sex

<http://members.aol.com/Sebringsil/> Text only information on male sexuality

<http://www.joaniblack.com/sexuality.htm> Books and videos on sex, vibrators and masturbation.

**Possible scenarios:** A library could decide to not to block the **Sex** category on all library computers, depending on the library's interpretation of and AUP definition of "harmful to minors". Alternatively, the library could choose to block those sites on computers in the children's room but not have it blocked on adult computers. Please read the ALA's Revised Q&A (in PDF format) for more guidance on this issue. It can be found at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/WOissues/civil liberties/washcipa/qanda/q.htm>

## How you use and setup the filter is dependent on your reading of the CIPA requirements and your Internet Safety Policy/AUP!

### Disabling the Filter

Schools and libraries can set up their own override accounts at the Control Center. The users of these override accounts can bypass filtering for 15 minutes by entering an authorized override name and password. The 15 minutes default time was set by N2H2 not MSLN. You can also request that an email be sent to you when the override is used if you would like to keep statistics on how often an override account was used. For example, if you create a generic "Patron" override account that emails you every time it is used you could get an idea how often overrides were being

used anonymously to help determine if a readjustment of the filter may be needed. Overrides go into effect immediately.

## Descriptions and sample websites from each of Minimum Filter categories.

More information on the Bess filter categories can also be found at the N2H2 website.

<http://www.n2h2.com/products/bess.php?device=categories>

### Adults Only

Sites that the author or publisher labels as being strictly for adults. Such labels include "Adults Only," "You must be 18 to visit this site," "Registration is allowed only for people 18 or older," and "You must be of legal drinking age to visit this site."

#### Examples of blocked sites:

<http://www.riddler.com/> - Game site; to register you must fill out a form and say that you are over 18.

<http://community.parachat.com/adult.html> This is an adult chat site. You may pay for a membership; free membership has limitations; free and paid membership requires that you say you are 18 or over.

<http://www.match.com/> This is an Internet dating service. Membership is free but requires that you check an 18 or older box.

### Hate Discrimination

Sites that specifically target a group of people based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnicity in a hateful, derogatory manner. The language of these sites often includes racial slurs and is insulting, abusive, and sometimes violent.

#### Examples of blocked sites:

<http://www.stormfront.org/> White supremacy web site

<http://www.godhatesfags.com/> Anti-gay based run by Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas

<http://www.whitepride.com/> White supremacy items shopping web site

### Illegal

Sites that promote illegal activities, or offer instructions or advice that can be used to commit illegal activities. Such activities include making or distributing child pornography, making bombs, hacking (breaching computer security), phreaking (breaching phone security or phone service theft), lock picking, selling pirated material (such as music, videos, fake IDs), and counterfeiting.

#### Examples of blocked sites:

<http://darron.net/family/think/stealthisbook.html#2.08.5>

How to make free long distance phone calls and get into movies for free, cheat, steal, etc.

<http://come.to/anarchy/> Game playing and download site (online gambling?) - this link is being redirected now.

[http://www.erowid.org/plants/cannabis/cannabis\\_cultivation1.shtml](http://www.erowid.org/plants/cannabis/cannabis_cultivation1.shtml) How to grow marijuana.

### Nudity

Sites that contain photos or images of bare or visible genitalia, pubic hair, buttocks, or female breasts. This category includes only sites that contain non-pornographic nudity (that is, nudity that is not intended to be sexually arousing or erotic).

#### Examples of blocked sites:

<http://carolinafoothills.com/> Nudist resort web site

<http://www.bodyscapes.com/> A photography gallery of nudes as landscapes.

## **P2P/Loopholes**

Sites that offer a loophole that can be exploited to access pages which would otherwise be filtered out from your service. This includes proxy evasion directions, Peer to Peer software, anonymizing services, and some Web translators. etc. Unless this category is selected, the system's Internet Content Filtering protection can be compromised.

### **Examples of blocked sites:**

[www.imesh.com](http://www.imesh.com) File sharing program web site

[www.grokster.com](http://www.grokster.com) File sharing program web site

<http://www.kaza.com> Music sharing site

[www.loopholesoftware.com/](http://www.loopholesoftware.com/) Proxy site/software to avoid web filters and firewalls

[www.zeropaid.com/](http://www.zeropaid.com/) File sharing information portal

## **Pornography**

Sites that contain material that are intended to be sexually arousing or erotic. This includes photos, animation, cartoons, and stories. This also includes child pornography.

### **Examples of blocked sites:**

<http://www.clublove.com/> Explicit sexual material - membership required

<http://www.porno.com/> Popups to many porn sites

## **Sex**

Sites that contain descriptions or depictions of sexual acts, specifically those without the intent to arouse (sites which contain material intended to arouse fall under the Pornography category).

Sexual merchandise and fetish sites fall under the Sex category.

### **Examples of blocked sites:**

<http://www.handbooktogreatsex.com/> Overview of online book on sex

<http://members.aol.com/Sebringsil/> Text only information on male sexuality

<http://www.joaniblack.com/sexuality.htm> Books and videos on sex, vibrators and masturbation.

## **Violence**

Sites that contain graphic images or written descriptions of reckless violence or grave injury (for example, mutilation, maiming, or dismemberment). The Violence category includes graphically violent games.

### **Examples of blocked sites:**

<http://www.fangoria.com> Horror film site

<http://www.carpenoctem.tv/killers/> Biographies, history on serial killers

## What are Exceptions for this Filter?

### Bess Minimum Filter Exceptions

#### Education

The "Education" exception allows access to sites that contain material that may belong to another category, such as Sex, Nudity, or Violence, but that relates to an educational topic such as classic literature, history, art, or sex education.

**Examples of allowed sites:** <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/>

#### For Kids

The "For Kids" exception allows sites designed specifically for kids that contain material that may be filtered under another category, such as Games or Jokes.

**Note:** Games and Jokes are not part of the Minimum Filter although many MSLN schools may be filtering these sites through customized filters or lists.

**Examples of allowed sites:**

<http://disney.go.com/>

<http://www.alfy.com/>

#### History

The "History" exception allows access to sites that contain material that may be in another category, such as Sex or Violence, but that is non-fictional and historically significant.

**Examples of allowed sites:**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/stories/whreport.htm>

Coverage of Monica Lewinsky

<http://shamash.org/holocaust/> Holocaust pictures

<http://www.spectacle.org/695/ausch.html> Holocaust stories/info

#### Medical

The "Medical" exception allows access to sites that contain material that may belong to another category, such as Nudity or Tasteless/Gross, but that relates to the study or practice of medicine.

**Examples of allowed sites:**

<http://www.dryoho.com/> Breast implants information

<http://fbhc.org/modules/breastcancer.cfm> Breast cancer info; breast self-exam photos

#### Moderated

The "Moderated" exception allows access to moderated message/bulletin boards or chat sites. The author or publisher of these sites must state that efforts are made to prevent offensive material from being posted.

**Examples of allowed sites:**

<http://www.neopets.com/neochat.phtml> Moderated message boards for Neo Pet members

#### Text/Spoken Only

The "Text/Spoken Only" exception allows sites that contain material that may belong to another category, such as Pornography, but that is strictly in text or spoken word format. For example, the Text/Spoken Only category distinguishes written erotica from graphic pornography sites.

**Examples of allowed sites:**

<http://at.nifty.org/nifty/> Erotic stories - text only

<http://www.amazontrails.com/xena/theconquerorstouch.htm> Erotic story - text only