

To: "'a_baron@abaron.demon.co.uk'" <a_baron@abaron.demon.co.uk>
Subject: Bromley Libraries network
From: "Walkinshaw, Barry" <Barry.Walkinshaw@bromley.gov.uk>
Date: 15 May 2003 15:24:42

Dear Mr. Baron

I am replying to your email sent CEX Bromley Knowledge Group on 6 May.

At present the library service uses the same filtering system for its internet terminals as is used by the Education Department for the schools. This will therefore explain why the terms you listed are filtered. The Council was keen to ensure that there were similar filtering processes for the terminals given the public nature of the service.

The system works by excluding a huge number of unsuitable sites, mostly pornographic. However no filtering system can be 100% effective particularly as hundreds of new pages are added to the net every day. Hence your ability to access the Master Bates site but not one using the term fellatio. As soon as a new unsuitable site is discovered, it is blocked as has happened with the Bates site.

We understand that this approach can create difficulties for some of our customers but we do have to balance providing access to legitimate sites against preventing misuse of freely available public terminals. We do therefore have regular discussions with the filtering service on ways to improve it whilst still preventing access to pornographic and other unsuitable sites.

- You mention the paste facility. This will be available shortly as we roll out Microsoft Office as part of the People's Network project. This will enable cut and paste on email and internet and between any Office product. This has been piloted at two libraries and is now in the process of being extended to the others.

On the issue of speed, the library network operates on 2MB lines which connect the 14 branches with the Central Library and then a further 2MB line linking the latter to the Civic Centre. This link is due to be upgraded shortly to 100MB capacity. At the same time, the Council's current 4MB link from the Civic Centre to its ISP will also be upgraded to 100MB. These changes should improve system response times not just in the library service but throughout the Council where there is internet use. The full impact, however, is not likely to be felt until April next year as the Council's current contractual arrangements will only allow 20MB use until then.

Yours sincerely

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