

iBoss Web Filters Support ACLU's Free Speech Guidelines

It's a fact of the industry that the same web-filtering technology that can protect young people against access to age-inappropriate content (pornography, for example) can also be used to limit access to certain social or political viewpoints in a way that could infringe on free speech rights. We are pleased to report that, out of the box, iBoss Web Filters are already in compliance with the free speech concerns of many organizations, including those advocated by the ACLU in its "Don't Filter Me" campaign.

ACLU's "Don't Filter Me" campaign was launched in February 2011 to investigate and curb illegal censorship and filtering of pro-LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered) information on public school computer systems. In its six-month [report](#) on the campaign ACLU explains how "many public schools and libraries inadvertently censor positive, appropriate LGBT websites" because of the mistaken assumption that filters called 'Homosexuality' or 'Gay or Lesbian or Bisexual Interest' in the web-filtering technology they employ block sexually explicit sites inappropriate for school-age kids.

ACLU successfully approached nearly 100 schools, whose students had reported an inability to access positive LGBT websites, to have the school change their web filter settings. ACLU also contacted the companies whose web-filtering technology includes categories that function as a blanket filter against all types of LGBT content, positive or not.

According to ACLU's September 1 report: "This special LGBT category amounts to a 'booby trap' for schools and librarians who often don't realize that it doesn't contain pornographic material." The report goes on to state that a school choosing to block this LGBT category solely for the purposes of "preventing its students from online access to positive and accepting LGBT viewpoints and organizations ... violates student First Amendment rights to free speech and may also violate the federal Equal Access Act."

As a trusted partner to many schools and other educational institutions, we can assure our customers that the iBoss Web Filter products, out of the box, *do not* block LGBT content, nor do they include any kind of LGBT category, as many of the filters listed in the ACLU report do. Rather, the iBoss Web Filters classify sites based on their content focus, whether it be "dating," "news," "entertainment," or "pornography," without regard to sexual orientation, or political, religious, or social affiliation.

What's more, the iBoss Web Filter utilizes a layered approach to accurately classify websites. For example, an AI (artificial intelligence) engine first scans the web page looking for explicit adult or pornographic content. Based on the results, the site is initially classified, then sent for human review. This process ensures that sites that don't contain questionable content are incorrectly blocked.

For additional information on how iBoss Web Filters work to protect schools and their students from access to inappropriate content, please visit our [iBoss Enterprise](#) product pages.