

Net Pornography at the Office

Written by Steve Marr
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The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding the use of internet filters on computers in public libraries highlights that same issue for companies.

The question becomes: Should a company adopt a policy to curtail viewing of pornography on company-provided computers in the work place?

Sometimes, inappropriate sites are accessed innocently by employees, while at other times they are intentionally visited. Nevertheless, an employer has the legal right, and, I think, the responsibility, to filter internet searching on company computers.

Think of it: employers pay wages, and should have the right to effectively direct their employee's workday. Controlling use of the internet, while employees are on the job, is only one aspect of effective management.

Those who argue against porno filters say these filters sometimes block legitimate sites, while at times porno sites filter on through the filter. However, I use the net frequently for my research, and have never been blocked out of a needed site. And while I know that filter safeguards are not 100 percent, I figure that 99 percent prevention is far, far better than no prevention at all. I mean, if an anti-shoplifting system prove 95 percent effective, does it follow that we scrap the whole effort?

A company can use tracking software to follow an employee's surfing, though some view this as "big brother" at work, looking over our shoulder. Nevertheless, employers do have the right to direct our work efforts. They have the right to manage productivity, and the perusal of porno sites is not in their best interests.

Excessive personal use of the net during work hours is not appropriate, in any business scenario, whether for porno viewing or harmless gardening tips. Millions of hours are diverted

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from work purposes each month by wasteful use of an employee's time on the net. Employers should encourage their folks to do their personal net research during lunch, before or after work.

Placing filters on workplace computers will sharply reduce the possibility of smut entering our business life- and effective net-use tracking will constrain improper, unrestricted use of work time for personal ramblings at any time of day.

It's really an employer's right to do so.

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