Internet Safety Policies Checklist for CIPA Compliance

The Internet Safety Policy is a formal statement by the library meant to address responsible use of and behaviors while using the library's resources to access the Internet. For libraries receiving E-rate or LSTA funding, there are several specific topics that also must be covered in the policy; another requirement is that the Internet Safety Policy, prior to its adoption, be an agenda item and open for discussion at a public hearing or meeting with reasonable public notice. The topics are:

- ❑ Access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web
- ❑ The safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications
- ❑ Unauthorized access including "hacking" and other unlawful activities by minors online
- ❑ Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors
- ❑ Measures designed to restrict minors' access to materials harmful to minors

Though there may be special provisions where minors are concerned, the policy as a whole should be applicable to all users of the library's technological resources. Furthermore, a description of all technology protection measures (e.g., filters) is needed for full compliance.

Adult users are entitled to request that any filtering measures be unblocked for their computer session, so long as it is for "bona fide research or other lawful purpose," with the discrimination of such purposes left to the library staff. There are currently no standards in place for the type or effectiveness of filtering solutions, and the understanding communicated by this policy should be a firm recognition that no current solution is completely effective in restricting all undesirable content.

Specific aspects of internet safety should include:

- ❑ Downloading of licensed material, particularly through peer-to-peer resources
- ❑ Plagiarism and copyright
- ❑ Harassment and defamation
- ❑ Sharing of personal information, especially that which could be used to identify or locate an individual
- ❑ Objectionable material, such as graphic pornography or violence, or bigoted and hateful speech

The policy should advise as to courses of action when encountering these materials, and reiterate consequences for deliberately engaging in unsafe behaviors online. Further guidance should be offered, particularly with regard to minors, and perhaps addressed in a separate document intended to raise the awareness of parents or guardians. Such a document could also be used to explicitly shift responsibility to the parent or guardian for a minor's behaviors or actions when accessing the Internet through the library by stating that the library cannot act in place of the parent or guardian ("in loco parentis") for minors using its resources.