



# Bulletin: Websense Internet Filtering

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**OBJECTIVE:**

The Internet is a powerful tool that provides enhanced productivity, communication, and unprecedented instant access to large amounts of information. As is the case with most powerful tools, there exists the opportunity for misuse. Websense Filtering has been introduced to PLNet to ensure students can use the Internet safely, with a reduced risk of visiting sites containing inappropriate or harmful content.

**BACKGROUND:**

When a PLNet user tries to access a web site, the Websense software determines whether to permit or block access to the site by comparing it against a predetermined list of prohibited sites. If the software determines access to the web site should be blocked, a message screen appears indicating that the connection has been refused.

Websense filters Internet content by working in conjunction with the Websense Master Database of more than 2.5 million sites, organized into 75+ categories. Currently the types or categories of sites that Websense is filtering include, but are not limited to, sites with adult, sex or racism/hate content as described below:

*Adult: Sites featuring full or partial nudity reflecting or establishing a sexually-oriented context, but not sexual activity; sexual paraphernalia; erotica and other literature featuring, or discussion of, sexual matters falling short of pornographic; sex-oriented businesses such as clubs, nightclubs, escort services, password/verification sites. This also includes sites supporting online purchase of such goods and services.*

*Sex: Sites depicting or graphically describing sexual acts or activity, including exhibitionism.*

*Racism/Hate: Sites that promote the identification of racial groups, the denigration or subjection of groups (racially identified or otherwise), or the superiority of any group.*

Websense Internet Filtering software has been selected by PLNet managers because it is based on pass-through filtering technology, the most accurate, reliable and scalable method of Internet filtering. Pass-through filtering requires all requests for Web pages to pass through an Internet control point such as a firewall, proxy server or caching device. Websense is integrated with these control points and validates each request to determine whether it should be permitted or denied. All responses are logged for reporting purposes.

The Internet is a constant changing environment. While every effort is made to filter inappropriate use, it is recommended that teachers and facilitators remain diligent in monitoring students use of the Internet. If an inappropriate site is accessed and not blocked by Websense, we ask that the website address is forwarded to the PLNet Help Desk. Appropriate actions will be taken to ensure this site is blocked from future viewing. Alternatively, there will be incidents of sites filtered under the above criteria that are not inappropriate and have legitimate educational value. These sites should be brought to the attention of the PLNet Help Desk to remove the block.

The overall benefit of PLNet using the Websense filtering software is that it prevents users of the network from inadvertently or purposefully going to sites on the Internet that are deemed inappropriate. It also ensures the most effective use of the PLNet bandwidth.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: PLNet Help Desk 1-888-769-5678 or send an e-mail to [plnetbc@eds.com](mailto:plnetbc@eds.com)**