

# Don't Filter Me!

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## When Your School Blocks LGBT Content with Blue Coat Filtering Software

Blue Coat's web filtering software has a category called "LGBT." Blue Coat created this category in 2007 to separate non-sexual LGBT websites from sexually explicit ones, in order to make the non-sexual LGBT content more accessible for students. But some schools and libraries have blocked this category in the mistaken belief that the category was designed to include sexually explicit websites.

In order to dispel this confusion, Blue Coat has updated its definition of the LGBT category. The LGBT category is now defined as:

Websites that provide reference materials, news, legal information, anti-bullying and suicide-prevention information, and other resources for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender ("LGBT") people or that relate to LGBT civil rights. The websites included in this category were selected because they do not contain sexually explicit content and are generally suitable for viewing by all age groups.

Blue Coat also issued a statement clarifying that schools seeking to comply with CIPA do not have to block the "LGBT" category to do so. The statement explains:

Customers – including schools, libraries, and other public institutions – do not need to block the LGBT category to prevent users from accessing sexually explicit content, whether LGBT-related or otherwise. WebFilter contains separate and distinct categories for sexually explicit content and other adult material (e.g., Adult/Mature Content, Alternative Sexuality/Lifestyles, Nudity and Pornography), which can be blocked to prevent access to sexually explicit content. Further, blocking the LGBT category is not recommended as a tool for public institutions to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA").

You can read the entire statement from Blue Coat at the following link:

<http://sitereview.bluecoat.com/LGBTStatement.jsp>

No filtering software is perfect. If your school or library's network administrator believes that sexually explicit material has been incorrectly placed in the "LGBT" category, the administrator should alert Blue Coat to the incorrect categorization. Errors can be reported to Blue Coat at the following address: <http://sitereview.bluecoat.com/sitereview.jsp>

Public schools and libraries must ensure that their Internet filtering software operates on a viewpoint-neutral basis. Blocking the "LGBT" category can lead to viewpoint discrimination because the category includes LGBT-supportive websites but not similar websites with anti-LGBT viewpoints.