Procedures for Viewing Content Restricted or Blocked by Websense

Websense web filtering software is used to block access to certain material (such as pornographic websites and websites maintained by hate groups), to prevent computer use that occupies inordinate bandwidth (such as music downloading or video streaming) and to limit access to material that may be inconsistent or inappropriate to the mission of the college. Faculty and students should review the "Appropriate Use Policy for Durham Technical Community College Computing Resources" carefully for guidance on acceptable uses of the college's computer resources.

Whenever a faculty member wants to review web content in an instructional lab or classroom, they should first check the availability of that website from the lab or classroom at least 24 hours in advance of the class. They should follow these steps when the Websense web filter screen appears in response to an attempt to reach a particular website.

1. Verify whether the website in question is "blocked" (that is, no access is available) or "restricted" (access is available but limited by time). Generally, sites likely to contain sexually explicit or pornographic material, sites likely to be maintained by terrorist or hate groups, likely on-line gaming sites, and sites likely to permit media streaming are blocked or restricted.

2. If the website is "blocked" or "restricted," the faculty member can request access by contacting the Director of Information Technology Services Department (Beverly McComb) by e-mail. Instructors should send this request at least 24 hours in advance of the time access is needed. This message should include the following information: the url of the site requested, the location of the computer being used to research the site (faculty office, classroom or laboratory), and a brief explanation of the reason access is requested. The Director will review the request and unblock the site. If any questions about the request arises in her review, the Director will consult with the Senior Vice President/Chief Instructional Officer, who will make the determination regarding access. The faculty member will be notified by e-mail of the status of their request.

3. A faculty member can request a review of the status of a category of websites by sending an e-mail to the Senior Vice President/Chief Instructional Officer including the category to be reviewed and a summary of the reasons why the review is requested.

4. When gaining access to restricted sites please bear in mind that the restriction applies to the hardware, not to the user. (For example, if a restricted site is accessed for sixty minutes in a class in a particular lab in a 10:00 a.m. class, that site cannot be accessed in the same lab later the same day.)

5. If a faculty member believes a website is blocked or restricted in error, he or she should request a review of that restriction by contacting the Director of Information Technology Services by e-mail.

6. Websense applies slightly different protocols in blocking or restricting material on instructional computers (in classrooms or labs), administrative computers (in

individual offices), and public access computers (in the Educational Resources Center). If faculty members intend to gain access to a website in a classroom or laboratory, they should check the availability of the site in that classroom at least 24 hours in advance.

7. Websense uses an algorithm to determine which websites to block or restrict. The web is a dynamic environment that requires ongoing revisions of the Websense algorithm. As a result, from time to time sites may become blocked or restricted when they were not blocked in the past.