

Children's Internet Protection Act Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act

February 9, 2001

In December, Congress amended Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Museum and Library Services Act, and the Communications Act of 1934, adding strings to federal funds granted to or for elementary and secondary schools and public libraries for access to the Internet. Basically, schools and libraries must install software on all computers having access to the Internet for the purpose of blocking or filtering out visual depictions that are "obscene" or "child pornography" or, if the computers are used by minors, "harmful to minors." Each of these terms is defined in federal law. In addition, as a condition for receiving the federal funding for Internet access under the Universal Service Fund Act, schools and libraries must adopt policies governing online behavior of minors, and schools must certify that they are monitoring minors' online behavior.

What Must the School or Library Do?

- Adopt or modify an internet use policy meeting the requirements of these new provisions.
- Implement and enforce the policy.
- Hold a public hearing on the policy.
- Certify to the FCC that it has adopted or modified the policy in accordance with the Act and that it is enforcing the policy.

When Must the School or Library Act?

- In general, in conjunction with applications for the next program funding year.
- Specifically for the universal service fund discounts, no later than October 28, 2001.
- Some leeway exists for extending the deadline for taking action one additional year. **What Happens if the School or Library Does Not Act?**

The school or library must forego receiving grant money and, in the case of Universal Service Fund fees, reimburse the discount.