

## Filtering of Web Materials

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ACTION for Health

Document Status:

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Published Paper         | <input type="checkbox"/> Practitioner's Pointers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working Paper           | <input type="checkbox"/> Briefing Note           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Report                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Research Tool           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draft                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Overview                |
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Prepared by:

**Elaine Gibson**

**LLB, LLM**

**Dalhousie University**

Document Contact:

**Ellen Balka**

School of Communication

Simon Fraser University

8888 University Drive

Burnaby, BC, Canada V5A 1S6

**tel:** +1.604.725.2756

**email:** ellenb@sfu.ca

**website:** [www.sfu.ca/act4hlth/](http://www.sfu.ca/act4hlth/)

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# Filtering of Web Materials

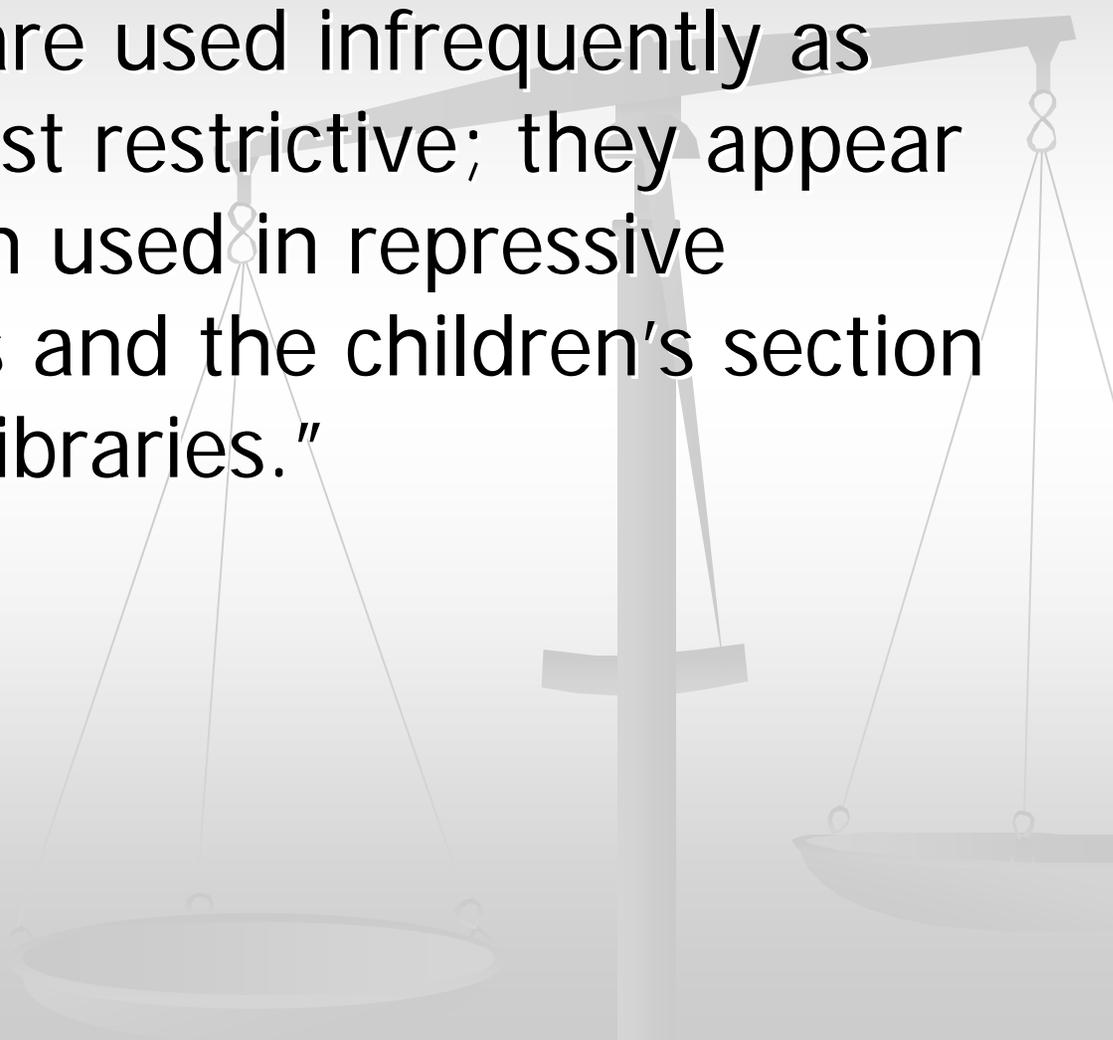
Elaine Gibson  
Dalhousie University



# Types

- Content Filtering
  - Key words
  - Graphical data
  - PICS
- Exclusion Lists
  - Blacklisting sites
- Inclusion Lists
  - Whitelisting sites



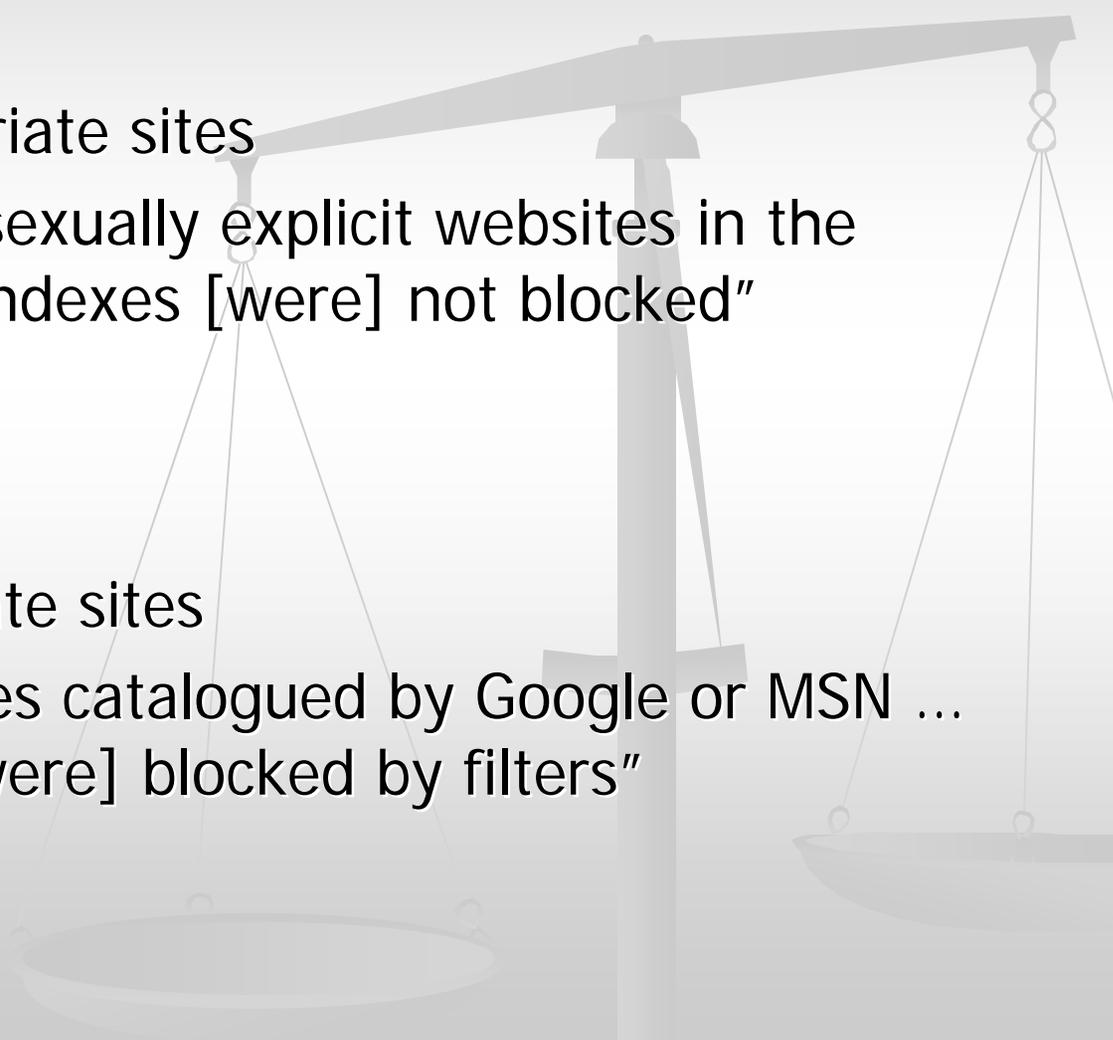
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- “Inclusion lists are used infrequently as they are the most restrictive; they appear to be most often used in repressive political regimes and the children’s section of some public libraries.”

# Levels

- Client
- Server
- ISP server



# Problems



- Underblocking

- Allowing inappropriate sites

“8.8% to 60.2% of sexually explicit websites in the Google and MSN indexes [were] not blocked”

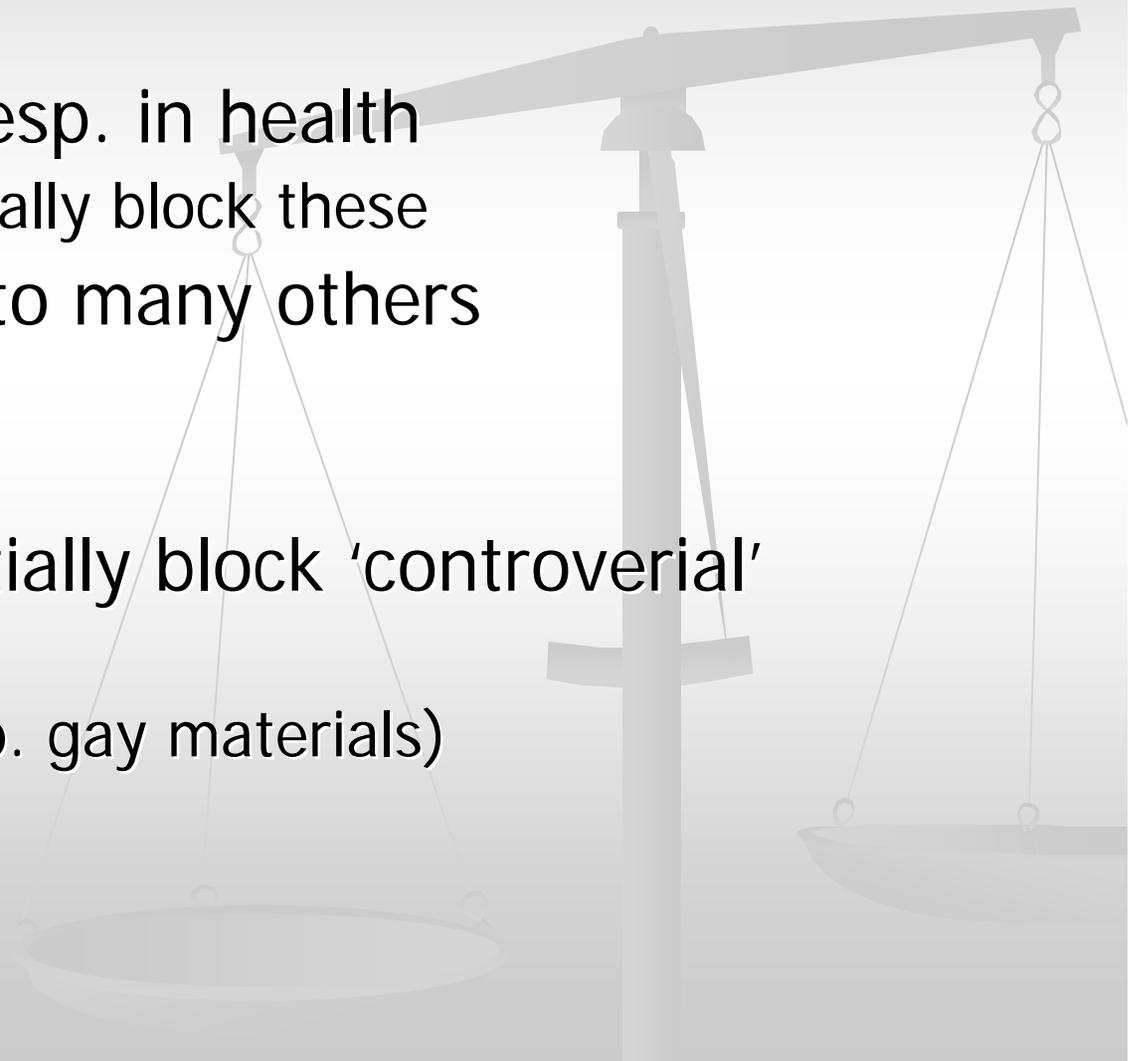
- Overblocking

- Blocking appropriate sites

“of the clean websites catalogued by Google or MSN ... 0.4% to 23.6% [were] blocked by filters”

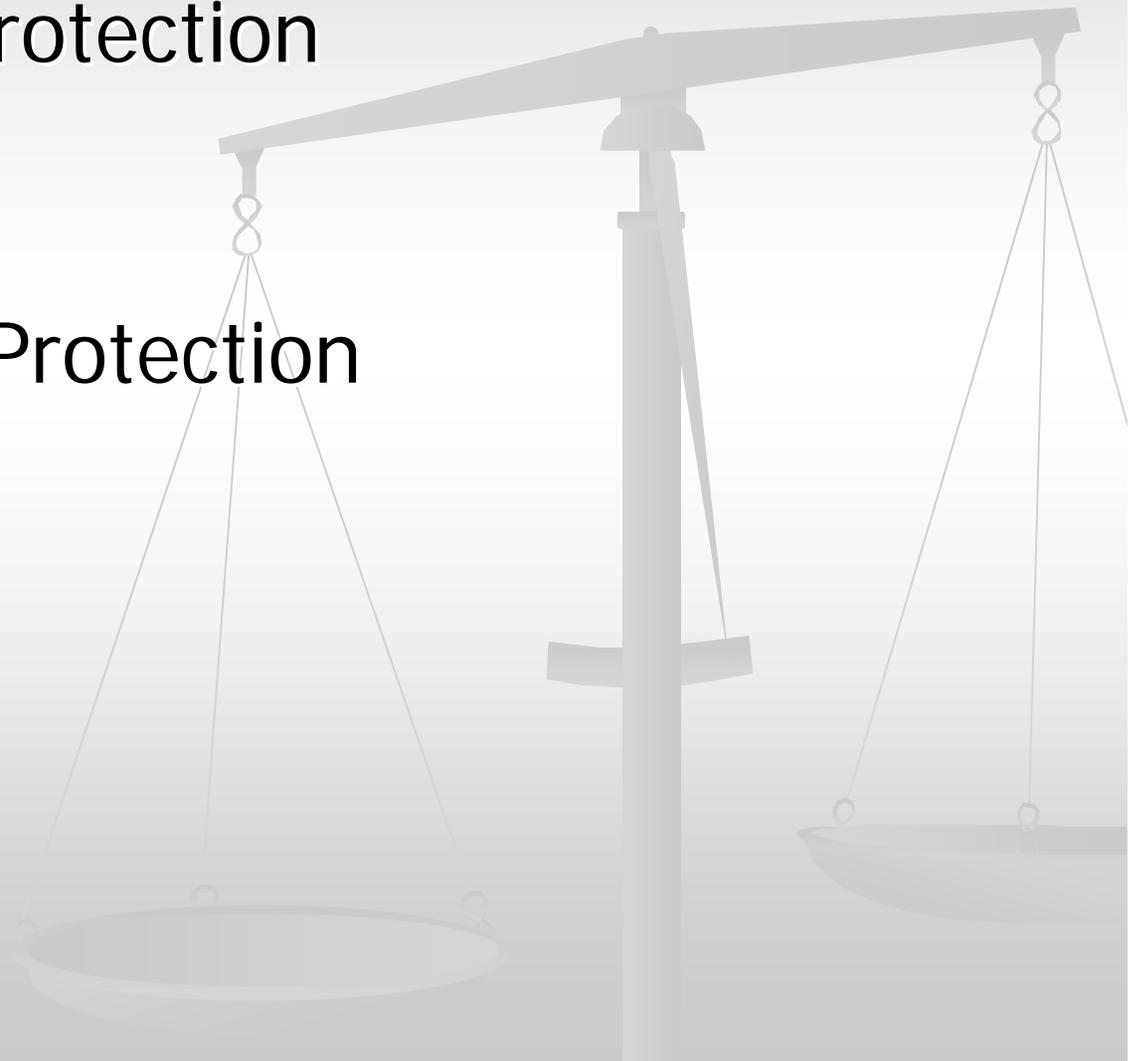
# Problems for Librarian Intermediaries

- Quackery online, esp. in health
  - Filters don't generally block these
- Porn words close to many others
  - *Breast* cancer
  - *Dick* Cheney
- Some filters intentionally block 'controversial' material
  - Sexual health (esp. gay materials)



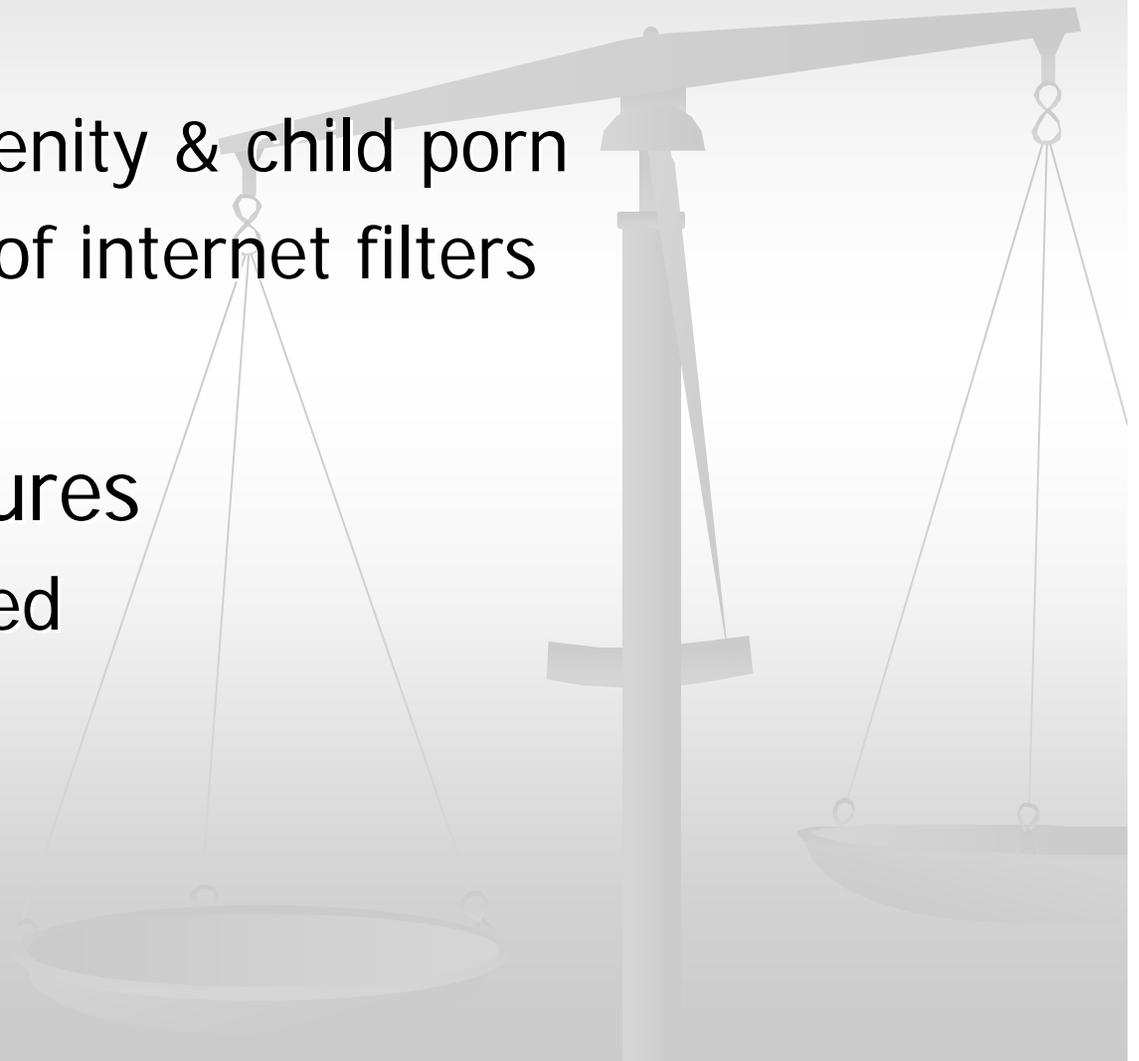
# Freedom of Expression

- Constitutional Protection
  - Canada & US
- “Conventional” Protection
  - UK & Australia

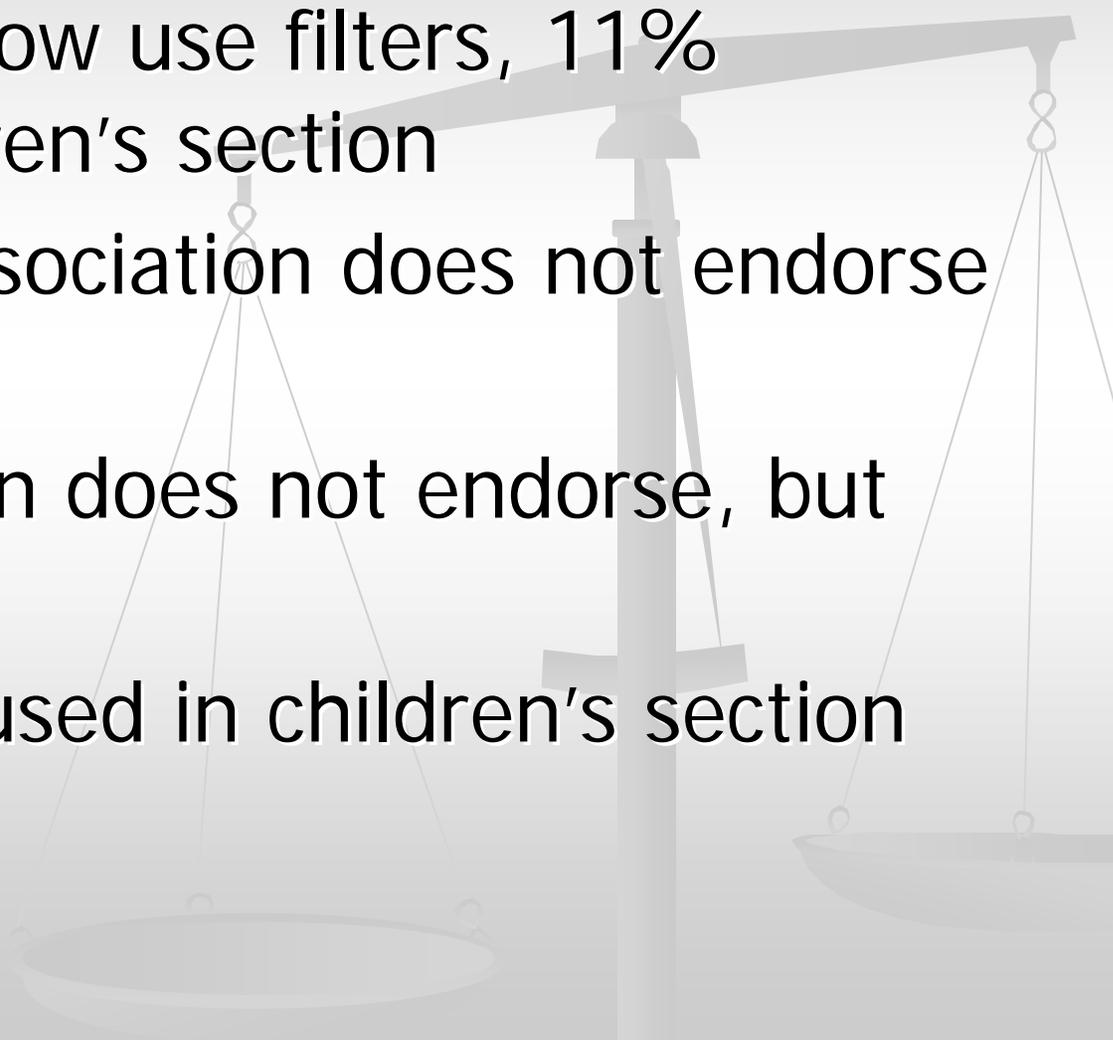


# Censorship

- Legislation
  - Outlawing obscenity & child porn
  - Mandating use of internet filters
- Voluntary Measures
  - Project Cleanfeed



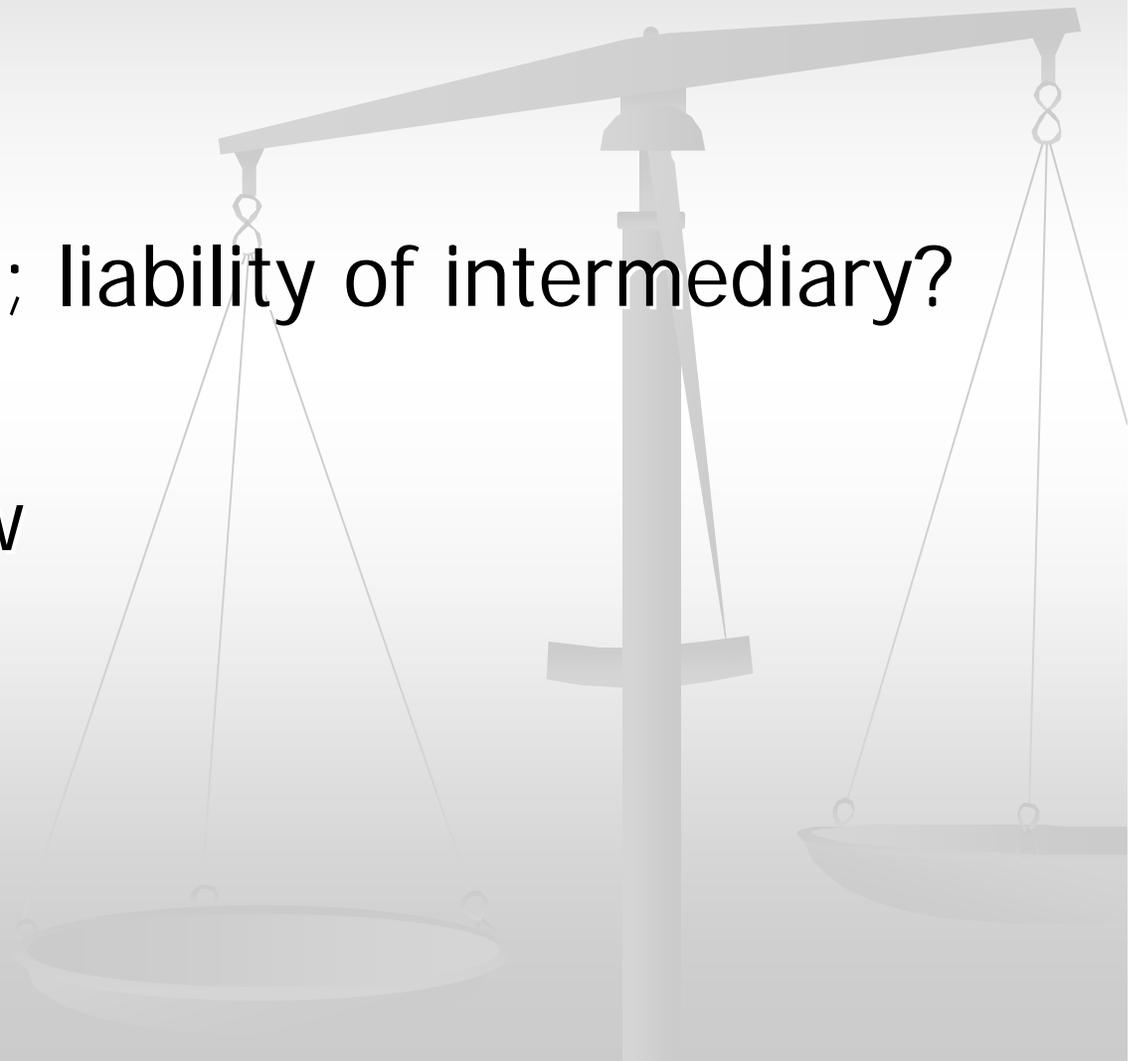
# Libraries and Censorship



- U.S.: majority now use filters, 11% confine to children's section
- U.K.: Library Association does not endorse use of filters
- Aust: Association does not endorse, but use varies
- Canada: Often used in children's section but not adult's

# Legal Aspects other than Regulation

- Criminal law
- Injury to patron; liability of intermediary?
- Employment law



# Library Guidelines

- Library Associations
  - Against filters
- District Libraries
  - May employ filters



# Ethical Aspects

- Access to information – civil liberties
  - Protection from crass materials – sick society
  - Tender age
  - Religious/cultural prohibitions/sensitivities
  - Overblocking & underblocking
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