DET internet filtering is designed to protect students and staff by restricting or allowing access to specific types of web sites.

From the inception of Internet access in schools and TAFE colleges, a filtering mechanism has always been applied centrally to minimise the risk of unacceptable material being accessed by students and staff.

The filtering engine used by the Department provides 72 inbuilt block and allow categories. Web sites (URLs) are allocated to specific categories. When a URL is requested, the filtering system identifies which category the URL is allocated to and allows or restricts the web site for the user, according to their role and year level in the case of students.

DET internet filters are flexible and enable web sites to be made available or restricted for different scholastic year levels.

Examples of filtering categories used by DET are provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defined Categories</th>
<th>Filtering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol, Auction, Gruesome content, Gambling, Weapons</td>
<td>Blocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacking, Pornography, Spyware, Extreme, Criminal skills, Anonymizers, Remote Access</td>
<td>Locked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Filtering Key

Allowed: Allows users to access web sites contained within the category.

Blocked: Blocking prevents a user from accessing web sites allocated to the category.

Locked: Locking a category blocks the web sites allocated to the category. A locked category can not be unblocked.

When a URL is requested that is Blocked or Locked, a user will receive a blocked web site message on screen. This message contains information about which category the web site belongs.

It is possible for web sites to be allocated to more than one category. For example, a web site about the human body may be allocated to the category of Heath and Nudity. If a URL is blocked in one category, and allowed in another category, the web site will remain blocked.
CUSTOMISATION OF DET FILTERS

DET internet filters are flexible and allows customised filtering categories to be created when needed. This enables DET to create specific categories to allow web sites that are required for educational or professional purposes that are otherwise allocated to a blocked category.

Examples of this type of customisation include:

- a custom “DET visual search engines” category to allow access Google images for all students and staff with a strict “SafeSearch” filter applied.
- a custom “DET allowed art sites” to enable students to access selected web sites identified as necessary for visual arts studies, that are otherwise allocated to a blocked category.

No filtering system can be 100% accurate and it is possible for web sites of educational merit to have been inadvertently blocked. Site Managers or nominated staff with “Filtering permissions” can request that a web site be blocked or unblocked.

APPLYING TO BLOCK OR UNBLOCK A WEB SITE

To apply for a change to internet filtering, nominated staff should complete the online form located within the DET portal. To access this form:

- Select the My Applications tab of the portal.
- Select the Account Administration link
- Click on Site Management to access Filtering information.

Requests to change internet filtering can also be submitted via the IT Help Services web site


A team of staff from secondary, primary and TAFE teaching backgrounds assess the educational impact of blocking/unblocking web sites and approve the appropriate action. This process will generally have a twenty-four hour turnaround for approval, except where there is some additional review of a web site required, e.g. by Curriculum Directorate.