

Complaint filed with the EEOC against the Minneapolis Public Library.
Re: allegation that policy of unrestricted Internet access creates a sexually hostile work environment in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.
Date: May 2, 2000.

I. DISCRIMINATION

I am a staff member at the Minneapolis Public Library located at 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN.

During the recent course of my employment I have been subjected to repeated exposure to sexually explicit materials and sexual activity at my place of employment. My employer has adopted an Internet access policy which allows for unrestricted access to sexually explicit Internet sites. My employer further allow patrons of the Library to print out on Library printers sexually explicit and obscene picture and materials from the Internet. As a result of this policy I have been forced to view computer screens filled with images depicting explicit sexual activity including bestiality, child pornography, oral, anal and vaginal sexual acts, homosexuality, and explicit photos of male and female genitalia and sexual poses. These same images have been printed out on our computers and left for staff to find, depicting the same pornographic and obscene materials.

II. RESPONSE OF MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Despite protests made by myself and other employees, the Public Library has not taken any reasonable steps to remedy this situation. They have continued their policy of unrestricted access to sexually explicit materials on the Internet. In fact their approach has made things worse. For example, one policy requires us to monitor the time a patron spends on the computer. We are not allowed to monitor the content of what they are viewing, but we are supposed to advise them they only have 30 minutes of use of the Internet. Supposedly this would limit the use of the computers for accessing sexually explicit material. This has resulted in numerous incidents where patrons verbally abuse staff members for attempting to tell them their time is up. In addition, when we are required to confront them, we are forced to them view the pornographic materials they are accessing. It is not uncommon for obscene and vulgar language to be directed at us if we attempt to enforce the time limit. In addition, the ready availability of such materials at the library has been accompanied by a sexual activity at the library including masturbation.

In addition, we are frequently placed in the situation of observing young children being exposed to these materials. I have on numerous occasions observed children watching adults access this material or be surprised by what they find left on a terminal they wish to use. I find this particularly distressing and upsetting since the library seems to place greater importance on unrestricted access of these materials

than on the well-being of children who are in many ways our most important patrons.

III. RELEVANT LAW VIOLATED

I believe that the Library's policy of allowing unrestricted Internet access of sexually explicit and pornographic materials has created an intimidating, hostile and offensive working environment for me and my co-workers and that it has otherwise substantially interfered with my employment. I believe this action is in violation of Title VII, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e, et seq., and the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minn. Stat. § 363.01 et seq.

Dated: 5/2/00 Virginia Pear