

Mr Charlie Parker

By email only to [request-471265-c54e68b4@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-471265-c54e68b4@whatdotheyknow.com)

11 April 2018

Dear Mr Parker,

**Our ref: FOI-18-0071**

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 March 2018, in which you requested the following information from the University of Sussex.

### **Request**

I am writing as a research volunteer at the Open Rights Group. We are conducting a study to better understand filtering and blocking of websites on the public estate, to understand what content and sites are inaccessible and why.

We would like to know, in relation to your publicly accessible Internet networks, or Internet networks for your clients:

1. The categories of content blocked or filtered, e.g.:
  - (a) Security or Malware
  - (b) Content types, eg adult, alcohol etc
2. Statistics relating to the requests blocked or filtered, eg how many site requests filtered or blocked per category
3. Monitoring requirements you have for users, eg if you record or may record their Internet usage

### **Response**

Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act").

1. We currently do not block content except where the source is a critical security risk to the University IT systems (for example, if we know that a website is being used to carry out an attack on us). We only monitor activity related to a category of websites listed as 'extremism' (i.e. containing extreme terror and hate material) by our firewall providers, who are Palo Alto Networks.

2. The University is unable to comply with your request as it does not hold the information that you have requested.

The University is only required to provide recorded information which it holds, as the Act does not require a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not already held, or to answer a question unless the information requested exists.

You can find out more about the relevant section of the Act, and some guidance points which the University has considered when applying the Act in this response, in the form of a Guidance Note attached to this letter.

3. Please see below for the University's policies and regulations relating to IT use and systems:  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/documents/regulation29.pdf> (please refer to section 6 for IT regulations)  
<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/infosec/policies>

If you are not satisfied with this response you may request a review but this must be within 40 days of receiving this response. In the first instance please write to Alexandra Elliott, the Head of Information Management and Compliance, at the address below. Full details of our Freedom of Information internal review procedure are at:  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/information/foi/procedure>.

If you need to contact us about your request please quote your reference number FOI-18-0071.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Pattenden  
Information Officer  
Information Management and Compliance

## **EXPLANATION OF FOIA**

You will find additional information about Section 1(1) of the Act below. Some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance used when applying it is included.

### **Section 1 (1) General right of access to information held by public authorities.**

Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—

- (a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and.
- (b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.

### **Section 3(2) Public authorities.**

For the purposes of the Act, information is held by a public authority if:

- (i) it is held by the authority, otherwise than on behalf of another person, or
- (ii) it is held by another person on behalf of the authority.

### **Guidance**

The University has an obligation to inform a requester whether it holds the information you have requested.

If the University does not hold the information requested, provided it provides notification to you pursuant to section 1(1)(a) of the Act, it is not under any further obligations.