

Collier uses web locks to keep computers available

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Certain popular websites and messengers, such as Facebook, Myspace, and Youtube, are not available on the ground floor area of Collier Library.

According to UNA's Acceptable Use Statement, "access to hardware, software, and networks is provided to members of the University for the primary purpose of enhancing the academic experience."

In other words, the computers on the ground floor of Collier are reserved for students doing coursework.

"There were [...] problems

with long lines of students waiting to use a PC," said Amy Butler, current Interim Director of Library Services, addressing condition prior to the library using the web locks on the main ground floor.

The primary reason for instituting the web blocks was to help prevent the problem of students staying on the PCs for too long. So far, the library administrators have started out small; there are not that many websites blocked.

But Butler is quick to point out there are easy options for students who need to use certain blocked sites for school-related work.

"We have laptops that

aren't restricted," says Butler, "and they aren't used very much."

Butler also points out that the few computers on the upper level floors are not restricted. And if those computers are being used, the library will unblock certain sites on the ground floor for a student if he or she has to use it for an assignment.

Since Collier library has instituted the web blocks, library administrators believe there has been a big difference. They say there have not been many long lines of students waiting to use a PC, and there are not as many complaints.

But some students argue

against them, saying they are "college adults" and "not in high school anymore" and should not be subject to restrictions.

And some students have even found a way to access restricted websites.

According to student Ben Montgomery, websites called proxies are "backdoor" ways of getting to the blocked sites. This is possible because the blocked site is being pulled up under a different URL, and the website-blocking software doesn't recognize it. One website is masking the other site. The site www.newestscooter.com is an example of a proxy server, which are perfectly legal.

Whether the web blocks extend to other areas of the UNA campus is left up to individual departments.

It may only be necessary to Collier Library due to a large volume of students it sees everyday and the lack of software availability in other parts of campus.

The decision to institute the web blocks was made over a year ago by the former Dean of Information Technologies to restrict access to popular sites in order to deal with complaints the library was receiving.