



As technology and education converge, the acronyms fly! Get the 411 to better understand the federal policies, programs, and agencies that impact classroom programs and practice.

COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998)

FTC rule took effect: 2000

Last updated: 2012 (amendments effective July 2013)

Rundown: If apps, websites, or online services want to collect or use personal information from young kids (under 13 years), they have to get permission from their parents. COPPA doesn't prevent them from creating a site or app for young kids. It just says they need parents' permission to collect, use, or disclose children's personal information.

Implications: The law keeps parents as the main decision maker in the digital lives of kids under 13.

Resources:

- Federal Trade Commission on COPPA: www.ftc.gov/opa/2012/12/coppa.shtm
- COPPA and Your Child's Privacy: www.common sense media.org/coppa
- Common Sense Media response to COPPA: www.common sense media.org/about-us/news/press-releases/statement-from-common-sense-media-ceo-james-steyer-on-the-ftcs-updates-

E-rate (Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund)

Took effect: 1997

Last updated: 2001

Rundown: Eligible schools and libraries receive federal discounts to help ensure affordable access to modern telecommunications services and the Internet.

Implications: Schools and libraries must comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in order to receive E-rate funding.

Resources:

- Common Sense Media E-rate and CIPA Toolkit for Administrators: www.common sense media.org/educators/erate-admins
- Common Sense Media E-rate and CIPA Toolkit for Teachers: www.common sense media.org/educators/erate-teachers

CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act)

FCC rule took effect: 2001

Last updated: 2011 (amendments effective July 2012)

Rundown: A law that mandates certain Internet safety policy and filtering requirements for recipients of E-rate discounts. Schools and libraries must block or filter Internet access to child pornography and to visual depictions that are obscene or harmful to minors (on computers accessed by minors). In addition, they must educate students about appropriate online behavior. The FCC is responsible for enforcing this act.

Implications: This act and the E-rate program are co-dependent. Schools receiving E-rate funding must follow CIPA, and those who follow CIPA are eligible for E-rate funding. Under CIPA, these schools must educate students on appropriate online behavior, including interacting with individuals on social networking sites and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Resources:

- Common Sense Media E-rate and CIPA Toolkit for Administrators: www.common sense media.org/educators/erate-admins
- Common Sense Media E-rate and CIPA Toolkit for Teachers: www.common sense media.org/educators/erate-teachers

NCIPA (Neighborhood Children’s Internet Protection Act)

Took effect: 2001

Last updated: N/A

Rundown: For libraries receiving E-rate funding, NCIPA prohibits certain activities, pertains to the universal service discounts only, and requires libraries to adopt and implement an Internet safety policy addressing a variety of specific issues – essentially an acceptable use policy – and to do so with local participation.¹

Implications: The technology protection measure mandates the inclusion of blocking or filtering in the Internet safety policy. One of a number of elements of the Internet safety policy is the use of blocking or filtering technology, as part of a technology protection measure.

Resources:

• American Library Association on CIPA and NCIPA: www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=ifissues&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=164253

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

Took effect: 1974

Last updated: N/A

Rundown: FERPA protects the privacy of student education records and gives parents certain rights with respect to these records. Parents have the right to inspect and review the records maintained by the school; the right to ask a school to correct records they believe to be inaccurate or misleading; and the right to contest uncorrected records in a formal hearing and with a formal statement placed with the record.

Implications: Schools can disclose certain personally identifiable “directory” information about students, but they must notify parents and allow them a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose this information.

Resources:

• U.S. Department of Education FERPA: www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

After Congress passes new laws, independent federal oversight agencies often take on the responsibility of implementing and enforcing these policies. The two key regulatory bodies for media policy are the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

FTC (Federal Trade Commission) is an independent government agency created in 1914 that has both consumer protection and competition authority in broad sectors of the economy. One of the FTC’s three strategic goals is to protect consumers by preventing fraud, deception, and unfair business practices in the marketplace — online and offline.²

FCC (Federal Communications Commission) is an independent government agency created in 1934 that regulates interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable in the U.S. The agency’s responsibilities include: promoting competition, innovation, and investment in broadband services and facilities; ensuring an appropriate competitive framework for the unfolding of the communications revolution; and revising media regulations so that new technologies flourish alongside diversity and localism.³

¹ “CIPA Questions & Answers,” 16 July 2003, American Library Association, Web, 20 February 2013.

² Federal Trade Commission, “About the Federal Trade Commission” (5 January 2012), available at www.ftc.gov/ftc/about.shtm.

³ Federal Communications Commission “What We Do” (undated), available at www.fcc.gov/what-we-do.