

# SAM (Smart Access Manager)

## Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.comprisetechologies.com/faq.htm>

**Q: What is SAM (Smart Access Manager)?**

A: SAM is a comprehensive public PC management, Internet access and print cost management software system that will seamlessly manage all public-use technologies for libraries.

**Q: Why should I implement SAM at my library?**

A: SAM enables a library to equitably share limited public computers among many patrons, to control or recover the costs of printing and other pay-for-services (i.e. photo copies, fees & fines, etc.) and to free staff from constant involvement with the public access PCs through self-service options.

**Q: What are the primary benefits of a comprehensive Access Management System?**

A: Empowers patrons and visitors, enhances the level of staff productivity, improves customer service and recovers costs.

**Q: Why has Access Management become so critical to libraries today?**

A: The growing number of public-use computers in libraries has had a profound impact on the type of service they provide. Unfortunately, librarians have felt the brunt of this increase because PCs can demand continuous babysitting. Many libraries continue use manual sign-up sheets and to collect print payments via the honor system. However, as libraries add more PCs, it is essential that staff be relieved of the responsibility of controlling time, reserving computers and excepting payments for all printed documents.

**Q: Why is the discovery and selection process for the right Access Management System so important?**

A: Public-use PCs are arguably the most visible technology investment to libraries. Properly managed, public PCs increase community reliance upon the library...improperly managed; they undermine quality service, reduce staff productivity, and squeeze operating funds.

**Q: Does SAM require a separate card (i.e. vend or smart card) or will it work with the library's current library card?**

A: No, SAM has been designed to work with the library's current card.

**Q: How does SAM go about authenticating users?**

A: SAM provides different options for authenticating users. The library can either have SAM interface directly with the Integrated Library System (ILS) in real-time via SIP, Patron API or ODBC protocols or a student management system. The library may also elect to do a one-time patron import into the SAM database, eliminating the need to purchase the protocol licensing from their ILS vendor.

**Q: What about the on-going maintenance of patron records?**

A: SAM can link in real-time with your Integrated Library System (ILS) so that when you add, edit, or de-activate a patron record it is automatically reflected in SAM. At the same time, this allows SAM to check various sets of patron data (i.e. lost, expired, delinquent, fees & fines, etc.) and deny access based on library policy.

**Q: Does SAM require a server?**

A: Yes.

**Q: What are the differences between server (web server) and non-server based (distributed architecture) solutions?**

A: Centralized Server-based (web) systems take advantage of the power of the Internet to provide anywhere-anytime administration and real-time reporting of all program components for one or many remote locations. Older legacy-based (distributed architecture) solutions are a collection of disjointed, unrelated components that carry a much higher Total Cost of Ownership (TCO).

**Q: What is the impact on bandwidth and network traffic for server vs. non-server based solutions?**

A: The small communication packets (HTTP) used by a centralized web-based system do not impact the network traffic within a LAN or WAN environment. SAM clients communicate only small activity and transactional data with the server; print spool files travel directly from client to server. Older non-server based systems however can drastically increase the level of traffic due to their reliance on the library's existing LAN and the fact that each and every PC needs to continually communicate with one another.

**Q: What happens if the Internet connection goes down, the server is offline or the ILS link is broken?**

A: SAM has been designed with fail-over and safe mode default mechanisms to seamlessly handle communication disruptions. This allows patrons to have continued access to the computers, yet at the same time the library can enforce their library policies.

**Q: How is the SAM system updated once it is installed?**

A: SAM has been designed with a powerful Updater that is included as part of its server software package. This enables a library to easily update client computers remotely from single site libraries up to large multi-site county systems without needing to revisit each workstation.

**Q: Does the library and/or the patron have to worry about privacy?**

A: No. SAM will automatically protect the privacy of the patrons; it will not keep track of their work and will clean out their bookmarks, favorites, cookies cache and Internet temp files at end of session.

**Q: With on-going privacy concerns, how does the library handle the patron activity information within the SAM database?**

A: The SAM Personal Privacy Protection Manager enables a library to specify what user-

identifiable information is retained in the SAM database. It renders unusable the specified elements of activity and transaction data while maintaining the integrity of retained detail and statistical data.

**Q: Can SAM recognize a user as an individual, adult vs. child?**

A: Yes, SAM can recognize each user as an individual so when used to manage Internet content it arms libraries with a powerful tool to resolve the conflict between unrestricted access to information, community standards, and state or federal regulations (CIPA).

**Q: How does SAM recognize a patron?**

A: SAM starts by displaying a login box. A patron enters their library card number and PIN (optional) to begin a computer session. Based upon the information SAM receives from the ILS (i.e. DOB, patron type, etc.) and the library's Computer Use Policy, SAM directs the appropriate access to user the user.

**Q: Does a user have to be a member of a library to use a SAM?**

A: No.

**Q: How does SAM handle visitors to the library?**

A: SAM provides the library with many flexible options for handling visitor access. This includes everything from re-usable visitor cards, to randomly generated one-day visitor access passes to a complete self-service option whereby the SAM Account Payment Machine (APM) can dispense and activate visitor cards.

**Q: What type of options does SAM provide for Print Cost Recovery?**

A: SAM provides unparalleled flexibility in controlling and recovering costs from printers, copiers and microfilm reader/printers to meet the diverse requirements of various locations. It allows each library to choose among print methods that best serve its customers and current policies. You can select from client-based release strategies with SAM Print Express and My Queue to dedicated print release station configurations.

**Q: Can you use different print control configurations at different locations (i.e. print release stations at Central, and the client-release (no dedicated print release stations) at smaller branches)?**

A: Yes.

**Q: What type of payment options does SAM offer for Print Cost Recovery?**

A: SAM provides many flexible configuration options to meet the needs of every library. You can have SAM simply notify the user of what they are printing and limit total prints; implement self-service coin/bill acceptors directly to print release stations; allow staff to record patron payments; or use Account Payment Machines (APM) which allow patrons or visitors to deposit money into their SAM account without staff involvement with or without dedicated print release stations.

**Q: Why is the Account-Based System so much more powerful versus the older method of paying cash as you release print jobs using coin/bill towers (COD)?**

A: The SAM account-based system supports the library's existing library cards (debit and smart cards are not necessary) and its payment functionality is flexible enough to extend beyond print to your copiers / microfilm readers as well as allowing a patron to pay for fees and fines while reducing coin-op dependence at the library.

**Q: Can SAM automate the process of manual sign-up sheets that staff members currently use to assign patrons PCs?**

A: Yes, SAM provides both a true First Available Sign-Up option as well as a web-based reservation system.

**Q: Is SAM an Internet filter?**

A: No, SAM is not an Internet filter. However, it can integrate with most industry leading server-based filters and enables the library with state-of-the-art manipulation of the filter product to address Internet issues at the public service, administrative and technical levels.

**Q: Why are ordinary filters not designed for libraries?**

A: Unlike SAM, ordinary filter technology is directed to the computer or network account, not the individual. It is designed for schools or businesses in which most users are denied the freedom of choice to manage their personal access to the Internet. While most filters provide an override for those times when unfiltered access is appropriate, this function is staff intensive, requires close supervision, and compromises the objectivity of your Internet Policy.

**Q: Why do ordinary filters make CIPA compliance nearly impossible for libraries?**

A: a) Adults have to request unfiltered access at staff desk  
b) Staff has to verify age and manually override the filter  
c) Hopefully staff will be available and remember to restore the filter at the end of that adult's session

**Q: How does SAM provide the freedom of choice missing in Internet filters?**

A: a) Automatically differentiates children from adults  
b) Lets adults select Internet access levels in real-time privately  
c) Works with leading filter products  
d) Requires NO staff involvement  
e) Uses the library's existing library cards  
f) Fully automates CIPA compliance