



Should the Internet Be Censored?

YES: John Carr, from "It's Time to Tackle Cyberporn," *New Statesman* (February 20, 1998)

NO: Raymond W. Smith, from "Civility Without Censorship: The Ethics of the Internet—Cyberhate," *Vital Speeches of the Day* (January 15, 1999)

ISSUE SUMMARY

YES: John Carr, an Internet consultant to NCH Action for Children, contends that children must be protected from exposure to hazardous Internet materials.

NO: Raymond W. Smith, chairman of the Bell Atlantic Corporation, argues that the commitment to free speech must always take precedence over fear.

From its beginning in e-mail, bulletin board systems, and newsgroups—long before the invention of the World Wide Web—the Internet has been a favorite haunt of extremists on both the right and the left, pornographers, adolescent males, and others who revel in exchanging unapproved information. Not surprisingly, this has alarmed those who feel that certain kinds of information—such as pornography, anarchist manifestos, and bomb-making instructions—should be kept from public view.

Such alarm is not new. It long predates the Internet:

- In 1792 Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* got him indicted for treason.
- Nineteenth-century censors banned the use of the mails to transmit birth control information.
- In the 1930s censors banned James Joyce's *Ulysses*.
- Every year various groups still try to have classic works by Mark Twain, Shakespeare, and many more removed from school libraries on the grounds of obscenity, racism, and alcohol and abuse advocacy.

But the Internet makes all these works (and many more) widely and easily available. Anyone with an Internet connection can download anything that has been posted anywhere in the world. Children are not limited to what they can find at the school or town library. Nor are adults, and Saudi Arabia, Serbia, and China have all made the news for restricting access within their borders to information that they deem inconsistent with their preferred religion, ideology, or view of current events. See Seydou Amadou Oumarou and Rene Lefort, "The Web, the Spider and the Fly," *UNESCO Courier* (September 1998).

In the United States, state and federal legislators have repeatedly passed laws restricting pornographic books and magazines, generally on the grounds that they offend against "community standards." Laws attempting to restrict a broader array of materials have not survived their court tests, at least in the United States. Jonathan D. Wallace, in "Pervasive Problem: The 1978 Supreme Court Decision Allowing Censorship of Dirty Words on Radio Threatens Free Speech in Cyberspace," *Reason* (October 1998), discusses the "pervasiveness" doctrine established by the Supreme Court in 1978; this doctrine, originally directed toward radio and TV, may threaten the Internet as well.

Legislative efforts such as the Communications Decency Act (CDA), which passed in 1996, and the Child Online Protection Act (COPA or CDA II), which passed in 1998, have tried to prevent people from making offensive material available via the Internet. The CDA targeted "indecent" material (including both obscenity and sober discussions of sex-related matters). The COPA had a broader aim, for it made it a federal crime to knowingly communicate for commercial purposes any material considered harmful to minors. Not surprisingly, both the CDA and the COPA have proved controversial, as have software programs that have been devised to detect and block access to offensive Internet sites. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), and the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), with others, have filed suits in federal courts, and the Internet community has provided testimony, witnesses, and attorneys. The same groups have also sued to block state laws censoring the Internet.

Like the proponents of the CDA and COPA bills, John Carr argues in the following selection that children must be protected from exposure to hazardous Internet materials such as pornography. "Anxieties about illiberal abuse of the Internet," he states, "are . . . at best misplaced and at worst paranoid, reckless or self-serving." In the second selection, Raymond W. Smith focuses less on pornography than on violence and bigotry, but he shares the belief of the critics of the CDA and the COPA that the commitment to free speech must always take precedence over fear.

The UK Internet industry also established the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), on whose policy board I sit as an unpaid member. The IWF runs a hotline facility, which allows people who find potentially illegal material on the Internet to report it. Once a report is verified two things will happen: if the material is housed on a server owned by a British-based ISP it will be removed forthwith and the police will be notified. The deal between the industry, the IWF and police, however, is that, whereas possession of certain types of illegal material is normally a crime, if the material is removed promptly the police will not prosecute the service provider.

The IWF's remit covers all illegal material on all parts of the Net, but it has prioritised child pornography, which is principally exchanged through newsgroups, occasionally is found on websites, and increasingly is being spread and procured through chat rooms.

Similar hotlines are springing up all over the world and the EU [European Union] recently announced its intention to support their development as part of an ambitious package of measures aimed at making the Internet a safer, more congenial place.

However, the IWF and the police are powerless to do anything about a huge body of material which, though not illegal, is highly offensive to some (hardcore pornography, for instance) or else dangerous or undesirable (say, information about bomb-making). It is not simply a matter of overprotecting the frail or faint-hearted: anyone may be accused or through curiosity stumble on unwanted matter. Debate is now focused on what might be done about this type of material: in the US it is a topic of urgent public concern.

There is no legal basis for banning these categories; neither will the newsagents' answer to printed pornography work: the physical barrier a "top shelf" policy offers to children and customers who don't want to stand and stare at porn mags simply cannot be replicated on the Net.

Instead the buzz phrase is "ratings systems", a concept akin to film or video classification, although necessarily rather more complex. A ratings system is an agreed set of criteria for describing material to be published on the Internet. The originator or publisher of the material provides the rating, which appears as a label attached to the article or site, giving a brief standardised description of its content. As the system is based on self-assessment, there may eventually need to be a set of sanctions for misrating and methods for policing, but these are not yet in place. The idea is that the ratings labels are picked up and read by filtering programmes that work with your browser. The user will have told the filtering programme what to allow through and what to block. Those who do not want any material filtered will still be able to set that option on their computer.

There is no jurisprudentially savvy software available on the market that would filter out only illegal material. You have to describe categories or types of material you do not want to see. Thus if you do not want to access anything with violent images or bad language, you could programme accordingly; alternatively you might find "PG"-type levels acceptable.

It is easy to foresee the emergence of third-party ratings systems; so for instance if you are a devout Catholic, you might put your trust in "Vatican



John Carr

It's Time to Tackle Cyberporn

The Great Internet Freedom Debate is rolling forward. At issue is the balance to be struck between "free speech" and the ability of families, employers, schools or other organisations to protect themselves against the receipt of material that is unwanted, illegal or both. The responsibility for striking the balance—and providing mechanisms to enforce it—is, however, increasingly seen not as a job for governments, legislatures or police forces, but for private citizens and the private companies that own and run the Internet industry.

There is a tenacious cyber-myth that the Internet is a vast, anarchic forum, beyond the reach of any government or authority, uncontrolled and uncontrollable. The reality is that for all parts of the Internet there are several potential points of control, and for the typical UK cybernaut one of them has been in operation for a while. So this debate is not about whether some sacred principle of non-regulation or freedom from censorship should be breached: that point was passed some time ago. Now we are discussing practical questions of degree: the ways in which intervention or regulation might occur; the level at which a censorship option might be feasible or appropriate.

If you link up to the Internet with any of the big UK-based Internet service providers (ISPs), such as AOL, MSN, CompuServe, Poptel or LineOne, you already do not enjoy full and unrestricted access to the superhighway. Even Demon, the ISP that represents the liberal wing in this debate, does not allow its subscribers to access everything that is "out there". Most of what is kept from you is illegal material, principally child pornography. There are ways of circumventing the barriers, but you have to know first that you are being "deprived"; second, how to get around the obstacles; and third, you have to find an unrestricted source that will let you in. The last bit in particular is not easy.

It is only in the past two years that the ISPs operating in Britain have chosen to restrict what they provide as part of their standard service. They have done so as a result of a combination of threats from police and the last government, administrative convenience and their own sense of civic responsibility (all foreign-owned ISPs come within the jurisdiction of UK courts for their operation in this country).

From John Carr, "It's Time to Tackle Cyberporn," *New Statesman* (February 20, 1998). Copyright © 1998 by *New Statesman*. Reprinted by permission.

Net", a subscription service which, if it is ever formed, will only allow material through that would not trouble the Pontiff. Different ratings levels can also be set for different users of the same computer or network, allowing parents to set different access levels for their children than for themselves.

There is already one type of ratings system in widespread use, built into Internet Explorer. That system was established and is managed by RSACi (Recreational Software Advisory Council on the Internet), a not-for-profit body linked to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. However, the current RSACi criteria are too narrowly American and their system is too crude. The UK's IWF has been trying to work out a better alternative and will shortly be consulting on its proposals, with a view to co-operating eventually with RSACi and other interests in the formulation of a global system. Some day a Baptist minister in the US Bible Belt, a liberal atheist in Amsterdam and a party official in Beijing should all be able to use the same means to decide whether or not their nine year olds can visit this or that website or newsgroup.

Not everyone welcomes the prospect, however. There is vocal opposition to the development of ratings systems, most forcibly expressed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in its paper *Fahrenheit 451.2—Is Cyberspace Burning?* In ratings systems the cyber-libertarians see not enhanced consumer choice but new tools being fashioned to allow authoritarian interests to "lock out" unpopular views, or otherwise to control the content of the Internet by requiring all ISPs, for example, to run it on their servers. They fear that minority opinions or tastes will be excluded.

These anxieties about illiberal abuse of the Internet through ratings and similar technologies are, I believe, at best misplaced and at worst paranoid, reckless or self-serving. The days are over when the Internet was the private preserve of academics and computer geeks. Now that its trajectory is to become an integral part of our living-room mass media (with a projected 200 million users worldwide by 2001), the rules simply have to change.

If we do nothing to curb some of the more rampant excesses, the Internet as we know it will cease to exist in the not-too-distant future. It will be replaced by (at least) two Internets: one which is safe, homogenised, dull, highly commercialised and accessible by subscription only, and another which will be for the poor: free and wild, but most definitely a place to go only at your own risk.

The anti-censorship lobby has had an early but significant victory in this battle. In 1996 the US government tried to legislate against offensive Internet material. The Communications Decency Act (CDA) was fatally undermined during its passage through Congress when the religious right sought to widen its ambit. The ACLU sued and in June last year the Supreme Court struck down the relevant provisions as being contrary to the first amendment protection of free speech.

Its strategy in tatters, in July the White House reiterated its intention to make the Internet "family-friendly", but stressed that it would look to the industry to take the initiative. Self-regulation was the new approach, but with the clear warning that inaction would lead to renewed legislative efforts. As Al Gore said at the time, "Hands off does not mean indifference."

In December the US Internet industry gathered in Washington, DC, to deliver its response. Many in the industry fully share their government's aims. Steve Case, president of AOL, declared: "Let's face it, many of us are parents and we want to work in an industry we can feel proud of."

All the major ISPs announced they were supporting ratings systems. The owners of some of the bigger Internet search services—Yahoo, Lycos and Excite—said they were considering in future allowing into their directories only material that had been rated. The ISPs also announced that they are going to amend their standard terms of contract to allow them to withdraw service from anyone found misusing their Internet connection by, for instance, soliciting or offering child pornography.

The conference also announced other initiatives being researched, notably to place greater requirements on distributors of hardcore porn not to sell to underage viewers; to make it easier to identify visitors to chat rooms; and to try to end the practice of anonymous e-mailing.

Disney and Time Warner announced they are establishing "whitelisting services": Internet subscription services that give you access not to the whole of the Net but only to the parts they have vetted. For "Vatican Net" read "Donald Duck Net." We are soon likely to see an explosion of similar whitelists here, especially aimed at the schools audience. BT's "Campus World" already exists and is being marketed as a safe haven.

Janet Reno, the US Attorney General, told the Washington conference that last year alone there were roughly 200 convictions for child pornography and other forms of paedophile activity where the Internet played a major part. She did not tell us how many arrests there had been, how many cases were awaiting trial or how many perpetrators escaped prosecution on technical grounds. The UK's IWF, in its first, under-publicised year of operation, received more than a thousand complaints, of which 300-plus were adjudged to contain illegal material, the great bulk of them relating to child pornography.

The Internet is far from a stable or mature technology. Advances are made almost daily, some of which can have profound and immediate consequences for the medium. It serves no one's interests to pretend we are on the brink of some last-ditch defence of democracy and free speech when we engage in this debate. Instead we should all recognise that almost all of us are looking, in good faith, for new answers to the new problems thrown up by the new technology.

In doing so I trust we will all give at least equal weight to the right of a child to grow up unmolested by paedophiles as we do to the rights of the rugged cyberfrontiersmen who pose as defenders of liberty in a medium that almost no one had even heard of six years ago.



Raymond W. Smith

Civility Without Censorship

I've been using the "bully pulpit" to alert various civil rights leaders and organizations (like Martin Luther King III and the NAACP) of the dangers posed by cyberhate. If not for the early groundbreaking work by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, I doubt whether I would have even known of this growing threat. Thank you for warning us—and now, for showing us—how extremists are using the Internet for their own purposes.

When thinking about this ... topic, I can't help but mention a cartoon that recently appeared in the newspapers. Through the doorway, a mother calls out to her teenager—who is surrounded by high-tech equipment—"I hope you're not watching sex stuff on the Internet!" To which her son replies, "Naw, I'm getting it on TV!"

Until recently, the chief concern of parents was pornography—kids' access to it over the Web and the fear of sexual predators cruising cyberspace. Now, we're worried about hate mongers reaching out to our children in digital space. As we have just seen and heard, Neo-Nazis and extremists of every political stripe who once terrorized people in the dead of night with burning crosses and painted swastikas are now sneaking up on the public—especially our kids—through the World Wide Web.

As cyberhate is nothing less than the attempt to corrupt public discourse on race and ethnicity via the Internet, many people see censorship of web sites and Net content as the only viable way to meet this growing threat. I disagree.

Instead of fearing the Internet's reach, we need to embrace it—to value its ability to connect our children to the wealth of positive human experience and knowledge. While there is, to quote one critic, "every form of diseased intelligence" in digital space, we must remember that it comprises only a small fraction of cyberspace. The Internet provides our children unlimited possibilities for learning and education—the great libraries, cities and cultures of the world also await them at just the click of a mouse key.

In short, we need to think less about ways to keep cyberhate off the screen, and more about ways to meet it head on: which translates into fighting destructive rhetoric with constructive dialogue—hate speech with truth—restrictions with greater Internet access.

From Raymond W. Smith, "Civility Without Censorship: The Ethics of the Internet—Cyberhate," *Vital Speeches of the Day* (January 15, 1999). Copyright © 1999 by Raymond W. Smith. Reprinted by permission of the author.

This morning, then, I would like to discuss with you the options that are available to combat cyberhate that don't endanger our First Amendment guarantees—and that remain true to our commitment to free speech.

That people and institutions should call for a strict ban on language over the Web that could be considered racist, anti-Semitic or bigoted is totally understandable. None of us was truly prepared for the emergence of multiple hate-group web sites (especially those geared toward children), or the quick adoption of high technology by skinheads and others to market their digital cargo across state lines and international date lines at the speed of light.

One possible reason some people feel inclined to treat the Internet more severely than other media is that the technology is new and hard to understand. Also, the Internet's global reach and ubiquitous nature makes it appear ominous. As Justice Gabriel Bach, of Israel, noted, this ability makes it especially dangerous. "I'm frightened stiff by the Internet," he said, "billions of people all over the world have access to it."

My industry has seen all this before.

The clash between free speech and information technology is actually quite an old one. Nearly a century ago, telephone companies, courts, and the Congress debated whether "common carriers" (public phone companies) were obligated to carry all talk equally, regardless of content. And in the end—though some believed that the phone would do everything from eliminate Southern accents and increase Northern labor unrest—free speech won out in the courts.

Whatever the technology, be it the radio or the silver screen, history teaches us that white supremacists, anti-Semites and others will unfortunately come to grasp, relatively early on, a new medium's potential.

We simply can't condemn a whole technology because we fear that a Father Coughlin or a Leni Riefenstahl (early pioneers in the use of radio and film to advance anti-Semitism or Hitler's Reich) is waiting in the wings to use the latest technology to their own advantage. Nor can we expect the Congress, the federal government or an international regulatory agency to tightly regulate cyberspace content in order to stymie language we find offensive.

The wisdom of further empowering such organizations and agencies like the FCC or the United Nations aside, it is highly doubtful even if they had the authority, that they would have the ability to truly stem the flow of racist and anti-Semitic language on the World Wide Web.

Anybody with a phone line, computer and Internet connection can set up a web site—even broadcast over the Net.

Even if discovered and banned, on-line hate groups can easily jump Internet service providers and national boundaries to avoid accountability. I think cyber guru Peter Huber got it right when he said, "To censor Internet filth at its origins, we would have to enlist the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who could start by invading Sweden and Holland."

Then there is the whole matter of disguise. Innocent sounding URLs (handles or Web site names) can fool even the most traveled or seasoned "cyber-naut."

As for efforts on Capitol Hill and elsewhere to legislate all so-called "offensive" language off the Internet, here again, we can expect the courts to

knock down any attempts to curtail First Amendment rights on the Internet. As the Supreme Court ruled last year when it struck down legislation restricting the transmission of "indecent" material on-line: (To Quote) "Regardless of the strength of the government's interest, the level of discourse reaching a mailbox simply cannot be limited to what is suitable for a sandbox."

In short, although the temptation is great to look to legislation and regulation as a remedy to cyberhate, our commitment to free speech must always take precedence over our fears.

So, cyberhate will not be defeated by the stroke of a pen.

Now, this is not to say that, because we place such a high value on our First Amendment rights, we can't do anything to combat the proliferation of hate sites on the Internet or protect young minds from such threatening and bigoted language.

Law enforcement agencies and state legislators can use existing laws against stalking and telephone harassment to go after those who abuse e-mail... parents can install software filtering programs (such as the Anti-Defamation League's HateFilter, or the one Bell Atlantic uses, CyberPatrol) to block access to questionable Internet sites... schools and libraries can protect children by teaching them how to properly use the Internet and challenge cyberhate... and Internet Service Providers can voluntarily decline to host hate sites. (Bell Atlantic Internet Services, for instance, reserves the right to decline or terminate service which "espouses, promotes or incites bigotry, hatred or racism.")

Given that today's panel has representatives from state government, law enforcement, the courts and the Internet industry, we can discuss these initiatives later in more detail. The point is, there are other ways besides empowering national or international oversight agencies, or drafting draconian legislation, to lessen the impact of cyberhate.

Freedom, not censorship, is the only way to combat this threat to civility. In short, more speech—not less—is needed on the World Wide Web.

In fact, the best answer to cyberhate lies in the use of information technology itself. As a reporter for the Boston Globe recently concluded, (quote) "the same technology that provides a forum for extremists, enables civil rights groups and individuals to mobilize a response in unprecedented ways."

We totally agree.

Our prescription to cyberhate is therefore rather simple, but far reaching in its approach:

The first component is access: if we're to get to a higher level of national understanding on racial and ethnic issues—and strike at the very roots of cyberhate—we must see that no minority group or community is left out of cyberspace for want of a simple Internet connection or basic computer.

At Bell Atlantic, we've been working very hard to provide the minority communities we serve with Internet access. Across our region, thousands of inner-city schools, libraries, colleges and community groups are now getting connected to cyberspace through a variety of our foundation and state grant programs. Also, our employees have been in the forefront of volunteering their time and energy to wire schools to the Internet during specially designated "Net" days.

Internet access alone, however, won't build bridges of understanding between people—or level the playing field between cyber-haters and the targets of their hate.

The second thing we must do is make sure the Web's content is enriched by minority culture and beliefs, and that there are more Web sites and home pages dedicated to meeting head-on the racist caricatures and pseudo history often found in cyberspace.

While cyberhate cannot be mandated or censored out of existence, it can be countered by creating hundreds of chat-lines, home pages, bulletin boards and Web sites dedicated to social justice, tolerance and equality—for all people regardless of race, nationality or sexual orientation.

Over the past two years, Bell Atlantic has helped a number of minority and civil rights groups launch and maintain their Web sites (like the NAACP, the Leadership Council on Civil Rights, and the National Council of La Raza), and we've done the same for dozens of smaller cultural organizations (like the Harlem Studio Museum and El Museo del Barrio).

We believe that kind of moral leadership can have a tremendous impact. Quite simply, we need more Simon Wiesenthal Centers, Anti-Defamation Leagues, and Southern Poverty Law Centers monitoring and responding to cyberhate.

If we're to bring the struggle for human decency and dignity into cyberspace, we must see that the two most powerful revolutions of the 20th century—those of civil rights and information technology—are linked even closer together.

Finally, we need to drive real-time, serious dialogue on the religious, ethnic, and cultural concerns that divide us as a nation—a task for which the Internet is particularly suited.

Precisely because it is anonymous, the Internet provides a perfect forum to discuss race, sexual orientation and other similar issues. On the Internet, said one user, "you can speak freely and not have fears that somebody is going to attack you for what comes out of your heart." It's this kind of open and heartfelt discussion that we need to advance and sponsor on-line.

Already, a number of small groups and lone individuals are meeting the cyberhate challenge through simple dialogue between strangers. I'm talking about Web sites run by educators to inform parents about on-line hate materials... sites operated by "recovering" racists to engage skinheads and other misguided kids in productive debate... web sites run by concerned citizens to bridge the gap in ignorance between ethnic, racial and other communities.

The "Y? forum," also known as the National Forum on People's Differences, is a wonderful example of a Web site where readers can safely ask and follow discussions on sensitive cross-cultural topics without having to wade through foul language or "flame wars."

As a columnist from the Miami Herald described the appeal of these kinds of sites: "As long as we are mysteries, one to another, we face a perpetuation of ignorance and a feeling of fear. I'd rather people ask the questions than try to make up the answers. I'd rather they ask the questions than turn to myth and call it truth."

In closing, my company recognizes that the Internet doesn't operate in a vacuum. We agree that those who profit from information technology have a special responsibility to see that its promise is shared across class, race and geographic boundaries.

That's why we're working with the public schools and libraries in our region to see that they're all equipped with the pens, pencils and paper of the 21st century... why we're helping to further distance learning and telemedicine applications that serve the educational and health needs of the disabled and isolated... why we're helping minority groups and civil rights organizations use information technology to spread their vision and their values to the millions of people electronically linked to the global village.

And that's the way it should be.

Let me leave you with a personal story...

When growing up, my Jewish friends and I often swapped theology—tales from the Hassidic Masters for stories from the Lives of the Saints. I remember from these discussions that one of the great Rabbis noted that the first word of the Ten Commandments is "I" and the last word is "neighbor." In typical Talmudic fashion, the Rabbi was telling us that if we want to incorporate the Commandments into our lives, we must move from a focus on ourselves to others.

At Bell Atlantic, the more we grow—in both scale and scope—the greater the emphasis we place on being a good corporate citizen, and the more we're driven to see that digital technology is used for purposes of enlightenment and education.

The Internet will fundamentally transform the way we work, learn, do commerce. It will also, if properly used and rightly taught, help bridge the gap in understanding between communities—becoming not a tool of hate, but one of hope.



POSTSCRIPT

Should the Internet Be Censored?

So far, the courts have supported those who, like Smith, believe that free speech is more important than censorship. In June 1996 the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania found the CDA unconstitutional on grounds that it violated rights of free speech. A year later, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed.

The censors did not give up, however. Many people feel that children must be sheltered from much of what is available on the Internet. Even before the CDA had been declared unconstitutional, legislators had begun work on the COPA in hopes that the bill would avoid some of the CDA's weaknesses. See Max Halperin, "The COPA Battle and the Future of Free Speech," *Communications of the ACM* (January 1999). Immediately, Judge Lowell Reed of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania issued an injunction prohibiting enforcement of the act, saying that it was overly broad and would unreasonably limit the Internet to material that is suitable for children.

Some people believe that filtering software is a better approach, for it permits access to be blocked to selected topics. See Marjorie Heins, "Screening Out Sex: Kids, Computers, and the New Censors," *The American Prospect* (July 1998). There appears to be no legal obstacle to the use of such programs by parents and schools (where they are very popular), but libraries are another matter. In Loudoun County, Virginia, the public library installed filtering software on all of its computers, which are used by both children and adults to access the Internet. In November 1998 Judge Leonie M. Brinkema of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia declared that usage unconstitutional, saying, "Mandatory blocking constitutes 'prior restraint'—an extreme form of censorship that few courts have allowed."

In December 2000 President Bill Clinton signed the Children's Internet Protection Act into law. This act does not try to censor the Internet but does tell schools and libraries that if they want federal funds for Internet connections, they must use filters. Proponents insist that this approach is constitutional, but the ACLU promptly announced that it would sue to block the bill. See Stephanie C. Ardito, "The New Internet Filtering Legislation," *Information Today* (June 2001).

Many people remain vitally concerned about children's having unrestricted access to pornography, bigotry, hate speech, and calls to violence. They fear that such access may encourage high school students to gun down their classmates; they fear that pedophiles may use the Internet to find children to lure into their clutches; and they fear damage to home, family, church, and state—just as Internet regulators in countries such as Saudi Arabia and China do. The efforts to censor seem unlikely to end.