

Bits of Morality

Bits of Morality: Ethical and Legal Issues for Children, Parents and Educators

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Outline

- Dangers on the Internet
- Technological defenses
 - monitoring
 - filtering
- Legal context
- Political context: conflicting pressures



Problem: Dangers on the Internet

- Pedophiles
- Hate groups
- Pornography
- Plagiarism
- Stolen music & video
- Warez
- Viruses
- Criminal hackers



Pedophiles

- Misrepresentation as youngsters
- Chat rooms
- E-mail
- Video films
- Bus/Airline tickets -- meetings



Hate Groups

- Growing movements across world
- Anti-everything
 - racist
 - anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, anti- . . .
 - homophobic
- Recruiting young people through Web
 - hate-rock
 - propaganda



Pornography

- Widespread – massive amount of content
- Misleading URLs
 - trademark violations, variant domains
 - <http://www.whitehouse.com> (still active)
 - misspellings
 - <http://www.micosoft.com> (no longer active)
- Junk e-mail invitations
 - e.g., new CompuServe accounts receive invitation for Russian porn from St Petersburg



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Plagiarism

- Buy / trade copies of essays, term papers
 - wide range of subjects, styles
 - choose your preferred grade (A+, B- . . .)
- Write-to-order
 - graduate students
- Anti-plagiarism sites available for teachers
 - check student paper against database of stolen papers



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Stolen Music & Video

- Napster, MP3, Gnutella, Wrapster . . .
 - trading copies of music
 - most without permission – copyright violations
 - lawsuits against companies & individuals
 - Gnutella, Wrapster extending trades to other files
- Problems
 - bandwidth saturation – many colleges
 - legal liability



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Warez

- Stolen software
 - violation of copyright law
 - often virus-infected
 - many Trojan Horse programs
- Sites
 - warez exchanges
 - individual exchanges
 - electronic auction services
- Severe penalties for school systems
 - Los Angeles: \$5M fines



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Malware

- Self-replicating code
 - program infectors
 - boot-sector viruses
 - Internet-enabled worms
- Non-replicating code: Trojan Horse programs
- Sources
 - accident
 - deliberate infection
 - virus-exchange sites
- Damaging
 - availability, integrity, confidentiality



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Criminal Hackers

- Propaganda
 - USENET groups
 - Web sites
 - printed magazines
 - regular meetings (2600)
- Appeals to kids
 - group affiliation
 - rebellion
 - power
 - video-game syndrome



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The screenshot shows a website with a dark background and green text. At the top, there's a banner for '2600' with a picture of a dog. Below that, there are several news items and advertisements. One prominent ad says 'STOP THE MPAA' and 'LIVE NET BROADCAST'. Another ad says 'FREEDOM DOWNTIME'. The news items include 'ORDER 2600 ONLINE', 'H2K', 'NEWS', '10/16/2000 HOW MANY LEGAL THREATS CAN WE GET THIS YEAR?', '10/14/2000 INTERLETTTERS', '10/05/2000 GET ANOTHER LEGAL THREAT', and '10/02/2000 HOW MANY LEGAL THREATS CAN WE GET THIS YEAR?'. The website also features a sidebar with various links and a footer with the text 'Copyright © 2006 M. E. Kabay. All rights reserved.'

Bits of Morality



CULT OF THE DEAD COW
PARAMEDIA • est. 1984 v. 5.0

Warning:

This site may contain explicit descriptions of or advocate one or more of the following:

adultery, murder, morbid violence, bad grammar, deviant sexual conduct in violent contexts, or the consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs.

Then again, it may not.

Who knows?

[enter graphical site](#)

[enter text-only site](#)

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Games

- Cooperative multiplayer games
 - Quake
 - Doom
 - Gambling
- More a nuisance than a danger
 - high bandwidth utilization

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Technology

- Monitoring
 - tools for reviewing what users are doing on the Net
- Filtering
 - tools for limiting what users are doing on the Net

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Monitoring

- Audit trails
 - disk files
 - browser URL trail
 - browser disk cache
 - anti-virus products
 - anti-game software
 - anti-MP3-music software
- Real-time alerts
 - Web page
 - suspect e-mail content
- Human inspection
 - remote-access software
 - supervising by walking around

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Filtering

- Anti-virus products
- Firewalls
- Self-rating & filtering proposals
- Censorware

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Firewalls

- Corporate
 - see ICSA Labs Firewall Product Developers Consortium
- Workstation firewalls
 - Zone-Alarm
 - BlackIce

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Self-rating & Filtering Proposals

- ICRA – Internet Content Rating Association
 - RSACi system
 - already works with common browsers
- PICS – Platform for Internet Content Selection
- Fundamental question:
 - Why would objectionable sites rate themselves at all?



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RSACi Standards

	Violence Rating Descriptor	Nudity Rating Descriptor	Sex Rating Descriptor	Language Rating Descriptor
Level 4	Rape or wanton, gratuitous violence	Frontal nudity (qualifying as provocative display)	Explicit sexual acts or sex crimes	Crude, vulgar language or extreme hate speech
Level 3	Aggressive violence or death to humans	Frontal nudity	Non-explicit sexual acts	Strong language or hate speech
Level 2	Destruction of realistic objects	Partial nudity	Clothed sexual touching	Moderate expletives or profanity
Level 1	Injury to human being	Revealing attire	Passionate kissing	Mild expletives
Level 0	None of the above or sports related	None of the above	None of the above or innocent kissing, romance	None of the above



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Censorware

- Types
 - Site-specific exclusion
 - lists of forbidden sites – updated often
 - Content recognition
 - lists of forbidden terms
 - nudity-recognition algorithms
- Problems
 - very high false-positive rates (rejecting sites unrelated to targets)
 - political bias (rejecting educational sites whose philosophy the makers reject)



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Legal Context: Disclaimer

I AM NOT A LAWYER AND THIS IS NOT LEGAL ADVICE. FOR LEGAL ADVICE, CONSULT AN ATTORNEY WITH EXPERTISE IN THE AREA OF LAW OF CONCERN TO YOU.



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Legal Context: First Amendment Law

- Complex area – much subtle reasoning
- Ultra-simple summary:
 - Who cannot censor speech?
 - governments acting against others as sovereign to control unprotected speech
 - governments acting against protected speech
 - Who can censor speech?
 - governments controlling their own speech or that of their agents
 - within limits, anyone else dealing with private speech on their own property



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Legal Context (cont'd)

- How do we decide if restrictions are constitutional or unconstitutional?
- Determine capacity in which govt is acting
 - Determine degree of protection of specific speech



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Determine Capacity

- Sovereign – least power to regulate speech
- Employer – can regulate speech
- Proprietor – can regulate
- K-12 educator – broad but not unlimited power
- University educator – less discretion to control
- Speaker – complete power to control speech
- Subsidizer – complete power



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Determine Protection

- Constitutionally valueless speech
 - deliberate or reckless falsehoods
 - obscenity (difficult issue)
 - child pornography
 - incitement to lawless conduct
 - threats
 - criminal solicitation or conspiracy
- Intermediate protection
 - commercial advertising that is not false or misleading
 - sexually explicit but not obscene speech



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Determine Protection (cont'd)

- Fully-protected: all other speech
 - political, social, religious, philosophical, scientific
 - art, literature, music, poetry
 - jokes, gossip, entertainment, casual chat



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Political Context: Conflicting Pressures

- For filtering
 - concerned parents
 - right-wing
 - religious fundamentalists
- Against filtering
 - concerned parents
 - libertarians
 - civil liberties advocates
 - privacy activists



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Education

- Who
 - Parents
 - Children
 - Teachers
 - Staff
- What
 - Awareness of dangers as well as benefits
 - Knowledge of options and resources
 - Up-to-date monitoring of political initiatives



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Values and Ethics

- Don't lie – so what about
 - pseudonyms?
 - pretending to be what we are not online?
 - sending e-mail with forged headers?
 - manipulating the stock market?
 - plagiarism?



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Values and Ethics (cont'd)



- Don't gossip – so what about
 - spreading rumors and hoaxes?
 - posting information about others without permission?

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Values and Ethics (cont'd)



- Treat the stranger with respect – so what about
 - hate groups?
 - writing or spreading viruses, Trojan horses, worms?
 - sending junk e-mail?

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Values and Ethics (cont'd)



- Pay fairly for people's work – so what about
 - using shareware without paying for it?
 - making illegal copies of software?
 - music?
 - videos?

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Recommendations



- Define standards of acceptable use for children, students, teachers and staff
 - important issue is the discussion
 - safeguard children against harm
 - respect other people
 - see Netiquette guidelines
- <http://www.fau.edu/netiquette/net/netiquette.html>
- <http://www.pbs.org/uti/guide/netiquette.html>
- <http://marketing.tenagra.com/rfc1855.html>
- <http://www.primenet.com/~vez/neti.html>

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Recommendations (cont'd)



- School Internet oversight group
 - include all concerned
 - students
 - parents
 - teachers
 - staff
 - explicitly discuss each issue
 - protecting children against bad people
 - protecting others against children
 - intellectual property rights
 - training in critical thinking

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Recommendations (cont'd)



- Provide educational resources for all concerned
 - acceptable-use guidelines
 - limited expectation of privacy
 - pamphlets
 - URLs

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Recommendations (cont'd)



- At home, in libraries and schools
 - Use supervision-by-walking-around
- Install *monitoring* software, not *blocking* software
- Discuss infractions with all concerned – parents, students, staff, teachers

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DISCUSSION



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