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FINE ART, PRINTMAKING

POLICING THE INTERNET
- THE CYBERPORN DEBATE

by

SHIRLEY HOLLAND

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INRODUCTION

Any consideration of pornography tends to engender lively debate. With the female form of intense interest to the pornographer, the involvement of feminists in the debate comes as no surprise. They hold that the lack of respect for women, manifest in pornographers' treatment of their sex, cannot be good for their image and certainly militates against success in their struggle for equal rights. Many of them also feel that pornography glorifies violence against women.

One approach to the problem is to prevent production and/or dissemination of pornography, i.e. resort to censorship, but there is no consensus on this. Sweeping the problem under the carpet cannot be an acceptable solution. It is important that free speech is preserved because it is a potent weapon in women's fight for equality. A possible solution is for women to get in on the pornography act themselves and produce alternative imagery which gives a feminine slant.

The development of the Internet has exacerbated the problem. It is a network of global proportions with the obvious problem relating to lack of control over material produced in another state except by breaking international links. Should the Internet be subject to criteria applied to print media or are the more severe standards of the

broadcast media more appropriate? The fact that the Internet goes right into the home, where children are computer literate, is disturbing. As the content of hard-core and child pornography continues to deteriorate towards the depths of depravity, this is a problem which must be addressed.

U.S. government policy on this is now tending towards censorship leaving the First Amendment under threat. Are stipulations which will protect children, and the availibility of freedom of choice to adults mutually exclusive?

The search for solutions is an urgent preoccupation on many fronts. Government, parents and especially software firms with an eye to profits are anxious for a solution. Can advanced technology which spawned the problem also supply the antidote? Will parents, armed with the latest software tools succeed in safeguarding their children's viewing? On the success of their efforts will depend the number of their children who, on reaching adulthood, can boast of reaching a healthy adulthood.

CHAPTER ONE

PORNOGRAPHY AND FEMINISM

"Pornography can be viewed as a 'problem', or as a debate between objectivity and subjectivity, gender and power, representation and interpretation"

- Lizbeth Goodman

The general perception of pornography, certainly among feminists, is that women are exploited and objectified by the male pornographer and the male viewer both of whom are placed in positions of power. Feminists, concerned about the representation of women within society and the potential damage from pornographic imagery, are greatly perturbed and a lively debate has ensued. Two schools of thought evolved, one favouring censorship and the other inclining to the view that denial of freedom of choice is not in the long-term interest of women.

Two standard-bearers in the struggle against pornography and for censorship are *CATHERINE MACKINNON* and *ANDREA DWORKIN*. They had a significant input into the debate by managing to obtain an official ruling that would curtail the availability of pornographic imagery. This was the "Minneapolis Ordinance" which would "allow women to take civil action against anyone involved in the production sale or distribution of pornography on the grounds that they had been harmed by the image of women's sexuality that it portrayed".

(Gillian Robertson, Linda Semple, p. 268 1992)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Their definition of pornography was basically any depiction of women in a sexual situation. This definition together with the solution is problematic and it assumes there is a relationship between pornography and violence towards women. Therefore, the common arguments used in defence of censorship and against pornography need to be recognised.

1. Pornography is the theory, rape is the practice.
2. Pornography is itself violence against women.
3. Pornography is incitement to sexual hatred.

The first argument assumes that pornography leads to rape and other violent assaults on women. This assumption lies in the belief that rapists' violent deeds are a result of the stimulation deriving from their viewing of pornographic images. Catherine MacKinnon believes that pornography acts twice against women - once when it is made and secondly when it is viewed. She believes that in the making of pornographic imagery women are degraded, raped and in the more extreme circumstances she claims that they are sometimes even murdered in so called "snuff movies".

Evidence which links pornography and violence against women is of three main types:

1. Anecdotal or 'hearsay' testimony
2. Evidence from psychological experiments
3. The analysis of the correlation between the statistics on the availability of pornography and the incidence of violent crime against women.

("The Case against Censorship" - Rodgerson & Wilson)

This is an area where getting reliable and conclusive evidence is not a simple matter. Hearsay evidence is unlikely to stand up to scrutiny. It is difficult to attach much weight to evidence from psychological experiments. People used in such experiments are human and may be influenced unknown to themselves. We are dealing with an individual's human reaction to pornographic imagery. It is a very personal reaction and this makes any results arrived at in the artificial environment of a laboratory unsatisfactory.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of a link between pornography and violence against women can be found in the following statistics. "Between 1972 and 1979 the number of rapes and the availability of pornography with explicit content in Britain both increased. In the same period however, there was a reduction in the amount of hardcore pornography and an increase in the number of all indictable offences". (The Case against Censorship) Strong though this evidence of a link with violence may be, the second

statistic indicates that it is not conclusive. There is a world-wide increase in the incidence of violent crime even in developing countries and therefore we cannot conclude that a reduction in the availability of pornography would mean less violent crime against women.

In our consideration of the probable causes of violence against women we cannot dismiss society attitudes in general. Perhaps the continuous use of imagery where men are in higher positions than women and generally have a power over women could be to blame. If the woman is stereotyped into the subordinate role men feel they have authority and control over the weaker person. Who will maintain that this attitude in society, developed and accepted over the centuries, does not influence the rapist in helping to justify his misdeeds to himself? There certainly is some influence but how much we cannot measure.

Argument two of the anti-pornography lobby postulates that pornography is itself violence against women. This means that not only does the imagery produced provoke acts of violence against women but the very act of the production of pornography is in itself a form of oppression of women. To have this effect the imagery does not have to portray acts of violence. In fact the most popular pornographic magazines for heterosexual men do not contain images of violence. They do, however, show scantilly-clad women whose style of dress is not totally abnormal. However, to put the naked or near-naked body of a woman in

a demeaning situation is to strip that woman of respect and to oppress her as viewed both by the photographer and viewer. We have here a play of power between a man and a woman with the latter taking the subordinate role. In other words we have a good example of sexism in action but we cannot state that it is an incitement to violence against women.

The final argument to be used against pornography is that "pornography is incitement to sexual hatred". What this suggests is that through pornographic imagery it is not male desire and lust that are apparent but their hatred of women.

Dworkin & MacKinnon in their book "Pornography & Sexual Violence: Evidence of the Links" have an example of this. They instance the case of a native Indian woman, Ms. V., raped by white men who screamed into her face that what they were doing was better than what was depicted in "Custer's Last Stand", a video game featuring the rape of a Squaw. Ms. V. felt the hatred they exuded, a hatred incited by their obvious familiarity with the video game. This incident is perhaps not conclusive evidence in support of argument three but few will deny that certain types of male, not a majority, can easily hate a female continuously depicted in pornographic imagery as a demeaned belittled sex object to be used at men's behest.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST CENSORSHIP

To censor or not to censor pornography, that is the question and we now come to arguments against censorship. Another group of feminists has emerged calling themselves F.A.C.T. (Feminists against Censorship Taskforce). Formed in 1984, they did not agree with feminists taking an anti-pornography stand and held that the relationship between pornography and violence had not been proven. Furthermore they considered that to support censorship would be to allow a power over free speech which was not in feminists' interests. They were on firm ground here as the Minneapolis Ordinance had been declared by the courts to be in violation of the First Amendment which guaranteed freedom of speech.

Perhaps the campaign by some feminists in favour of banning/censoring pornography constitutes a misdirection of their energies. Is not the perception of women as the weaker sex the real kernel of the problem? Surely it would pay greater dividends were women to throw down the gauntlet to the male by participating in pornography production on their own behalf thus aiding in discovering their own sexuality and asserting sexual freedom.

> The only hope lies with free speech. Without free speech there cannot be equality. With free speech equality is not guaranteed but we have the opportunity to pursue it. It gives us the tools we need to begin the work.
>
> (Article "Internet" - The Ethical Spectacle" Nov. '95)

To censor and to ban is really to sweep things under the carpet and far from solving a problem this approach simply postpones it, frequently to appear later in a more virulent form. The successful approach is to come to grips and grapple with a problem rather than fudge the issue by pushing it aside. In the Thatcher years when the AIDS problem surfaced it was suggested in the House of Commons that victims of the disease should be quarantined. It can be seen that people in power felt it appropriate to ignore minorities and problem groups by shutting them away and, in a manner, censoring people. We know now that what is needed is a clearer understanding of AIDS and an acceptance of reality. The reality is that these people exist. To ban material containing images of "gay sex" does not get rid of gay sex, gay people or AIDS.

Progress can only be made by recognising problems and thus the ill-effects of pornography. To demand censorship will backfire as the problems will remain hidden. Feminists who support pornography censorship are ill-advised. Feminists should appreciate that free speech is their greatest ally. It is capable of gaining equality and censorship will never do this. Catherine MacKinnon believes that 'free speech' allows the stronger more dominant speaker to silence the weaker one, and that women have been silenced by the speech of men. No one ever told her of Margaret Thatcher.

The real problem is that of inequality. To enforce censorship of any type is to allow an inequality. It allows a greater establishment the power to decide what to their way of thinking is offensive and to whom.

In the autumn of 1989 the members of the group FACT issued a leaflet setting out their objections to the pro-censorship arguments and explaining their position. The leaflet said:

> Women need open and safe communication about sexual matters including the power relations of sex. We do not need new forms of guilt parading under the banner of political correctness. We need a safe legal working environment for sex workers not repressive laws or an atmosphere of social stigma that empowers police and punters to brutalize them. We need sexually explicit material produced by and for women, freed from the control of right-wingers and misogynists whether they sit on the board of directors or the board of censors. We need an analysis of violence that empowers women and protects them at the same time. We need a feminism willing to tackle issues of class and race and to deal with the variety of oppressions in the world, not to reduce all oppression to pornography.

This feminist group (FACT) are aware of the problems that pornography brings and believe they should be critical of these images that are racist, sexist or exploitative. They are aware that to fight only against banning and censoring of sexually explicit imagery is not enough. An alternative would be to create their own or support people creating sexual images for women.

If there are images of women that are offensive (to women), degrading or stereotypical, alternative imagery

should be produced so that women can feel good about sexuality, gain more information about sex, break down stereotypes and start to interpret sex for themselves. To have the freedom to make one's own choice can only be positive.

The liberal attitude to pornography may suit feminists. However, it does not take account of recent improvements in accessibility to pornography which new technology allows. Chapter 2 will cast fresh light on the debate.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTERNET - PROBLEM OF REGULATION

"The question of accessibility is, of course, at the root of the pornography/censorship debate. The debate has surfaced in various forms in different generations, but has undergone a significant shift of focus in the past few decades"

(Lizbeth Goodman, Art.5.5 page 276 Imagining Women)

The Internet is a global network of over 20 million computers connected by telephone lines which exchange information words and pictures. Anyone with a computer can link up to the Internet and for the price of a local call get on line and communicate with people across the globe.

Presently film and television are the primary means of communicating visual information. However, computers are gradually becoming the principal communication device and by the end of the century, will be. It is debatable whether or not the Internet is a print medium similar to a newspaper or a broadcast medium like television.

The need to define the Internet as a medium is important because it affects the regulation of pornography on the Net.

Alan Wakeley, an Australian representative of the "Religious Alliance against Pornography" believes that legislators need to look at computers more in terms of a broadcast medium. If this were the case and the

Internet/computer world were to be established as a "broadcast medium", it would be subject to all sorts of government control unlike the "print medium" which is protected against government interference. While film, video and reading material are the chief means of presenting erotic adult material, parents and law-makers are very worried by the alarming imagery that can be received through the Internet.

(Alan Wakeley, Religious Alliance against Pornography, 4th April, 1995)

On this issue of regulation, the internet is extremely problematic when compared with other means of communication. It is a vast marketplace of ideas and information regarding politics, religion, science and technology and so is essential from an educational perspective. Yet the Internet can come straight into the home. With a modem and a computer anyone can send or receive material including pornography. This is the central problem regarding the Internet.

In the home children are often the masters of the computer and can access information without parental supervision. Some of this information could be compared to material available in an adult's bookshop and so, unsuitable for children's viewing. Generally regarding unsuitable imagery for children, censorship and total restrictions would to society seem to be justified. The difficult issue here is - just because something may be unsuitable for one group, should it be prohibited to all?

Censorship may have a part to play in relation to other media such as films, TV, etc., but should the Internet be similarly censored? Can a world-wide communication system feasibly be censored and who should be responsible for the censoring? Are there reasons other than the protection of children's viewing to censor the Internet?

PORNOGRAPHY ON THE INTERNET

The Religious Alliance against Pornography (RAAP) are a group that have spent a considerable amount of time in the U.S.A. and other countries researching future trends in the use of contemporary technology to convey obscene materials. They presented a report of a study to the Senate Select Committee on Community Standards on 4th April, 1995.

They believe that bulletin board systems and other technologies should be regulated, classified and restricted in a similar way to other twentieth century public media. Their main objective is to confront child and hard core pornography. Their perception of pornography is as follows:

- The linking of sex and violence as appropriate partners in human intimacy,
- portraying children as suitable sexual partners,
- conveying the message that some people, usually women, exist primarily for the sexual gratification of others and
- presenting deviant sexual behaviour as the norm, e.g. bestiality, real rape, simulated incest, urination, defecation and sadomasochism.

The Internet provides a wide range of material under the heading of pornography. Much of this is quite innocent such as articles which simply debate the entire issue of pornography in an informative and constructive manner. However, also offered is material designed, it would seem, to sexually stimulate rather than educate. Some of the available titles are:

- Pornographic pictures (This will make you cum)
- Hot sex pictures plus more. Come here right away!!!
- Get that funny feeling in your pants by clicking here!
- Naked women link
- Pictures of naked women.
- Piss orgy! 3 horny guys piss all over their girlfriends
- Super slut! Her girlfriend squats and pisses in her mouth
- Pregnant girl, pants at ankles, spread cunt, milking tits!
- Cindy! Footage from her video! Inserts hugh 12 inch dong!

Both Playboy and Penthouse have their issues on line. For Playboy a list is available of all the girls featuring on a monthly basis. It is possible to click on any 'monthly girl' in whom you are interested and you will receive a nude image of your chosen girl. There are also homemade porn pages (see appendix for examples). This section of the Internet is explored by hundreds of

thousands of people daily. There is an "alternative sex" newsgroup which has three hundred and fifty thousand subscribers. (Censorship of Pornography in Cyberspace, Caleshu & Pieczenik, article from Internet, p.2). It has the second largest readership, just behind "The New User's Guide to the Internet".

To find all other types of sexual imagery/pornography, the "Internet Sex Resource List" can link you to thousands of examples of sex-related material. It is possible to purchase sexual equipment etc. via the Internet with just a credit card and a modem. It is also possible to gain information ranging from bestiality to bisexuality.

Gerard van der Leun, Time Magazine finds

> the Internet gives people the chance to experiment with sex, engage in encounters they would not necessarily participate in. It allows people to meet new people every day, creating a new gender, sexuality and even personality by just pressing a few buttons. The on-line visitor can easily lead more than one life.... You can live out your wildest fantasies without danger of contracting sexual diseases, losing personal safety or committing to an unwanted relationship.
>
> (Caleshu & Piezenik p.3.)

Some of this imagery is not the average 'Playboy' pornography, and much of the experimentation van der Leun speaks of involves not just sexual acts between consenting adults. According to a research team at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who have conducted a study of on-line porn, there is a market and demand for images that can't normally be found such as images of

pedophilia (indecent photos of children) hebephilia (youths) and paraphilia (images of bondage, defecation, sadomasochism, urination and sex acts with a barn-yard full of animals). (Philip Elmer-Dewitt, Time July 3rd 1995)

It is indeed true that no sexual diseases will be contracted and the viewer remains safe albeit in a purely physical sense. It is however disturbing that this experimentation with sexuality and "living out your wildest fantasies" should involve children and minors.

Robert Copella, according to RAAP operated one of the largest pornographic computer bulletin boards in Chicago. His customers began to request more violent material featuring children. Within 10 months he had already signed up 2000 subscribers throughout the world. He had thousands of pictures available including children as young as one year being forced to have sex. Other computer images featured children being tortured or forced to have sexual encounters with animals.

"Cybersex has been going on since humans received the gift of imagination. Cybersex is, at bottom, simply old sexual fantasies in a new electronic bottle"

(van der Leun, quoted in Censorship of Pornography in Cyberspace)

To display imagery as already mentioned and refer to it as 'simply old sexual fantasies' seems extremely irresponsible and unacceptable. To transmit this type of

imagery is to abuse the nature of the Internet. However, this type of pornography is most popular. According to the Carnegie Mellon study -

> Trading in sexually explicit material is now one of the largest recreational applications of users of computer networks. At one U.S. university 13 of the 40 most frequently visited newsgroups had names like 'Alt. sex stories, Rec. arts erotica, and Alt. sex bondage.'
>
> (Philip Elmer-Dewitt, Time 1995)

The Carnegie Mellon study, using elaborate computer records of on-line activity measured accurately what people actually downloaded rather than what they said they favoured. This is information which adds to our knowledge of the type of society we live in. The study showed that 98.9% of the consumers of porn are men. Furthermore sales were boosted for Robert Thomas, owner of Amateur Action BBS (on-line-porn market leader), when "he front-loaded his files with pictures of sex acts with animals and nude prepubescent children. He also described more than 1200 of his pictures as depicting sex scenes between family members (father and daughter, mother and son). These "incest" images were among his best sellers accounting for 10% of downloads.

(Philip Elmer-Dewitt - Time)

THE INTERNET AND CHILDLREN

If damage to actors is ignored, then from a viewer's point of view it may be argued that no harm is being done.

So what is the problem and why is there all this talk of censorship?

The great fear regarding pornography on the internet is that some of this imagery may fall into the hands of young children who would not be emotionally prepared for such imagery. It can be argued that children should not be exposed to x-rated porn, as they are immature, their sexuality is undeveloped and they are unable to make informed decisions. It is in children's nature to be curious and they will simply not have the maturity to ignore such imagery or make the 'grown-up' decision on what they wish or wish not to view. Moreover children are often the most experienced and skillful when it comes to operating a computer. In the opinion of Indiana Senator Dan Coats "we face a unique, disturbing and urgent circumstance, because it is children who are the computer experts in our nation's families".

It is clear from a study reported to the 1986 U.S. Attorney General's Commission on Pornography by Dr. J. Bryant that children are receiving pornographic imagery which has in some cases inluenced their behaviour.

> Six hundred American males and females of junior high school age and above were interviewed about their "out-in-real-life involvement" with pornography. I found that 91% of the males and 82% of the females admitted having been exposed to x-rated hard core pornography. Two thirds of the males and 40% of the females reported wanting to try out some of the sexual behaviours they had witnessed. 31% of the males and 18% of the females admitted actually doing some of the things sexually they had seen in the pornography within a few days after exposure....

> With everyone of the children we studied we found an addiction effect. In every case girls as well as boys became hooked..... and kept coming back for more. Some of these children engaged in sexual assaults on other children.
>
> (Alan Wakely, RAAP,April 1995)

The findings of this study may not be representative of all youth and some of the responses may not have been honest. The findings , however, suggest that when exposure to porn does occur a large proportion of youth either acted out or became addicted to what they had seen. In any case a reaction did occur. If children do react at such an early age to such imagery, it raises the question whether or not this will have a long-term effect on them. If it is true that children "engaged in sexual assaults on other children" can this tell us anything about the overall effect of pornography on society? Does it imply that pornography is responsible for sexual violence?

In either case pornography was seen to have a negative influence. Is it right then to have such imagery at the touch of a button in the child's home? This study would suggest "no". Thus there appears to be a compelling argument for the introduction of some form of regulation and censorship. But unfortunately for those who would advocate it, censorship is anathema to the citizens of many lands. Let us explore the complexities of the position further.

FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHT OF FREDOM OF EXPRESSION

- Sen. Jim Exon. Communications Decency Act, 1995

On Jan. 30 1995 Senator Exon introduced the Communications Decency Act to the U.S. Senate.

> This bill proposed to amend the existing law prohibiting obscene or harassing materials in conventional media, to include 'utilization in telecommunications devices and facilities in .... interstate or foreign communications' -

(Caleshu & Pieczenik). The Bill extended existing laws to permit the government to police the dial-a-porn industry, the computer networks and thus the Internet, i.e. to censor pornography. It proposed to outlaw obscene material and impose fines of up to $100,000 and prison terms of up to 2 years on anyone who knowingly makes indecent material available to children under 18.

However, given the nature of how the Internet operates, this bill might not be effective. On-line-service providers would become criminally liable for any obscene communications that passed through their systems. This would "put the entire Internet at risk". (Philip Elmer-Dewitt, Time). So Exon revised the Bill. He then showed up in the Senate with his "blue book". According to Time Magazine, Exon had asked a friend to download some of the worst images available on the Internet. He had the images printed out, put in his "blue book" and invited his colleagues to stop by his desk on the Senate floor to view them. At the end of the debate which was carried live on C-span, the bill was passed by 84 votes to 16.

A momentous decision was taken by the U.S. Congress on 1 February, 1996 when it approved legislation restricting rights of Internet users in conflict with provisions of the First Amendment. This legislation proposes to *ban* indecent material on the Internet. The sending of such will be deemed a crime punishable by fines up to $250,000 and/or up to 2 years in prison. This act of Congress is more Draconian than Senator Exon's bill. Under it material that can be legally obtained in libraries and bookstores will be deemed illegal if distributed over the World-Wide Web.

> "With the stroke of President Clinton's pen on 8 February, 1996, this law has transformed the Internet overnight from the freest communication to the most heavily regulated medium in the United States".
>
> (SurfWatch protest page on Internet)

Whilst Sen. Exon's bill merely censors pornographic material this new act totally bans indecent material. The district judge handling the case has given government lawyers until 14 February 1996 to file written argument before making a ruling which is awaited with great interest.

Supporters of free speech on the Internet are naturally up in arms at this restriction of First Amendment rights. They have urged fellow advocates of free speech to wear blue ribbons, temporarily shut down their pages on the World-Wide Web and to contact their congressional representatives. Further protests have been launched

across the web including campaigns termed "Paint it Black" and "Thousand Points of Darkness". Home pages previously colourful were replaced by new ones cast in black to mark the passage of the law.

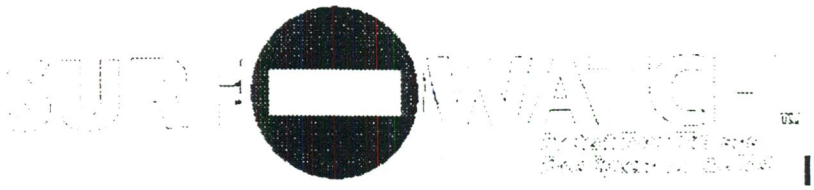
SurfWatch, a computer software firm intent on solving the children's viewing problem by providing an alternative to government regulation, are one protesting firm who replaced their normally multi-coloured page with one predominantly black. This page is re-produced overleaf.

FREE SPEECH VS. CENSORSHIP

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.
>
> (U. S. Constitution)

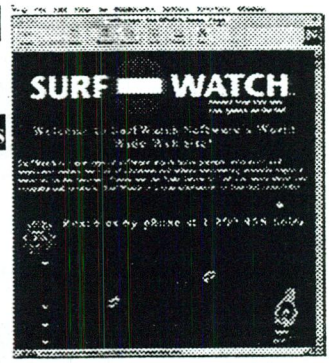
The passing of Exon's Bill evoked a variety of responses. Libertarians argued that it violated the freedom of expression. According to it, it would be criminal to "initiate the transmission of any comment, request, suggestion, proposal, image or other communication which is obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy or indecent".

(47 USC Sec. 223, Caleshu & Pieczenik)



Internet Censorship and Freedom of Expression

Why is this page black and what can you do to fight Internet censorship?



On Thursday Feb 1, 1996, Congress approved legislation to dramatically restrict the First Amendment rights of Internet users. With this act of Congress, the very same materials which are legally available today in book stores and libraries would be illegal if posted on World Wide Web sites or usenet newsgroups. With the stroke of President Clinton's pen on February 8, this law has transformed the Internet overnight from the freest communications medium to the most heavily regulated medium in the United States. SurfWatch participated in an online protest where thousands of web sites around the world went black. This 48 hour protest was organized by Voters Telecom Watch and the Center for Democracy and Technology. There is also a blue ribbon campaign (see below) sponsored by the Electronic Frontier Foundation to raise awareness about Internet free speech issues.

SurfWatch is a real alternative to Internet censorship, giving parents and educators the opportunity to limit unwanted material locally without restricting the access rights of other Internet users. "Twenty-five years ago when I wrote the original software which allowed access to the Internet, we could only imagine what kinds of information would be available" said Bill Duvall, CEO of SurfWatch Software. "SurfWatch is the first product created to make access to inappropriate material a matter of personal choice, creating a true alternative to Internet censorship."

In Washington, the US Congress has passed a law issue of how to protect children from access to material on the net that might be considered harmful. As the debate over obscenity on the Internet continues, SurfWatch is one of the companies working to create better solutions with the Interactive Working Group, an ad hoc coalition of industry and public interest organizations that are studying technological alternatives that empower parents without the need for burdensome regulation. The Working Group is coordinated by the Center for Democracy and Technology, a non-profit public interest organization based in Washington, DC.

Exon's bill regulating and censoring the Internet should effectively protect children. However, under the provisions of the First Amendment it is an adult's legitimate right to view whatever he or she chooses including pornographic imagery. The kernel of the problem is to reconcile protection of children with the free speech rights of adults.

However, the protection which the cherished First Amendment offers is about to be undermined. This very week (mid-February, 1996) Congress approved legislation dramatically restricting long-cherished freedoms. We are again head-to-head with the complex problem of adult rights and harm to children. Congress has made a decision for the U.S. and this will affect people's freedom world-wide. The double effect is to prevent the normal two-way traffic in information and ideas between residents of the U.S. and foreigners.

Mike Godwin, staff counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation complained that "The indecency portion of the bill would transform the vast library of the Internet into a children's reading room, where only subjects suitable for kids could be discussed".

(Philip Elmer-Dewitt, Time)

According to professor and author Daniel Linz, the conservative - moralist/normative theory may be one reason to be in favour of censorship:

> Society has the right to protect itself from the disorder and moral disintegration that result from individuals unduly pursuing their sexual self-interests. The government has the right therefore to limit such forms of expression. (Caleshu & Pieczenik)

Some examples of such censorship are as follow:

- Student Dan Robbins of Brown University created a page on the Internet for those interested in bondage, domination, submission, sadism and masochism. This included stories about alternative sexual lifestyles, situations and pictures ranging from "Catwoman in leather" to "Amateur and staged Acts of Bondage". On 31 March, 1994, the University asked him to shut down the page of content or else he would be brought before the Facilities Committee. Robbins shut down his page.

(Caleshu & Pieczenik)

- On 3 November, 1994, Carnegie Mellon University notified students of its intention to remove from the main campus-wide computer system several obscene newsgroups;

alt. binaries. pictures. tasteless,
the alt. binaries pictures erotica tree,
the alt sex tree,
and rec. arts. erotica.

The University believed they were obliged to remove such because of Pennsylvania state laws forbidding the dissemination of offensive material to minors, i.e. their underage students. After much controversy the university Faculty Senate voted to recommend restoration of all newsgroups. (Caleshu & Pieczenik)

This particular example underlines the need for clear guide-lines. Censorship of indecent material requires identification and definition of the type of material to be banned with that deemed acceptable left available. In this case the authorities made the decisions and acted for all the other adults in the college. Is it acceptable that just for the sake of a minority (underage students) the whole student body should suffer? As an educational institute the university was on thin ice because to censor information is to prohibit development of ideas and learning.

Susan Wendell, author of "Pornography and Censorship" sees some place for censorship.

> Specifically what counts as a justification for restriction on expression is that some form or act of expression tends to harm people other than those expressing themselves, that there is no effective and acceptable way to prevent the harm it does without restricting expression, and that the harm it does outweighs the harm of restricting the expression.
>
> (p.109) (Caleshu & Pieczenik)

One example of how an act of expression might harm a person other than the one expressing, is the story of student Jake Baker of the University of Michigan. He wrote a first person fictional story of sexual torture and murder. When a graduate of Michigan was net-surfing on a computer in Moscow he spotted the story on the alt.sex stories newsgroup. He recognised the name of Baker's fictional victim as the name of a classmate. He notified the campus authorities who found that Baker indicated in E-mail messages to a friend that he was interested in that sort of crime. The woman involved was extremely upset to hear about her unintentional role in the story. Baker is on trial facing a possible five years in a penitentiary.

(Levy 29, Caleshu & Pieczenik)

In this case the charges were dismissed. The judge ruled that while Baker's story may have been deeply offensive it was not a crime.

This brings us to another type of pornography. Can the same laws be drawn against imagery that has been manufactured? If a perfectly innocent image of a child through computer manipulation, is turned into an image of pornographic content though no child is harmed, can this be treated legally as if it were a real pornographic image? The image produced may be as offensive and disturbing as a real pornographic image, yet no "crime" was committed in creating it.

If a person manufactures porn simply for him/herself the state has no function in the matter. It is nevertheless real porn and the difficulty arises if it is disseminated to others whether or not for profit. If so, according to the C.D.A., the state must intervene. One still has to define what constitutes a pornographic image. A nude photo of one's child hanging in one's livingroom is not porn but if distributed on the Net, possibly with an added caption, it is. One man's innocence can be another man's pornography. In other words, pornography is, at times, in the eye of the beholder. It could be argued that those in government are not the best qualified to decide what is or is not child porn. Experts, such as state-appointed psychologists, are probably the best qualified for this important task. It is possible, we shall see, to solve the porn problem without the appointment of moral guardians.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Child porn is a serious problem which cannot be condoned in any way. The distribution of imagery like this, with its potential to harm, is in itself a crime that should be exposed to the full rigour of the law. Because of the essential quality of the Internet, that of being a world-wide library, it may be impossible to trace back to the roots of such imagery. This suggests that the solution is to prevent its distribution. Society would thus be prevented from becoming too familiar with such

disturbing imagery and thus desensitised by pornography's harm, shock value and destructiveness.

It may be argued that government should save us from ourselves, but nevertheless it is preferable if we make our own decisions on what we view rather than have society make them for us. It is said that "reading and viewing of pornographic material should be a personal and subjective choice". (Caleshu & Pieczenik). This is true but how can anyone allow images of children performing sexual acts with animals to exist or be produced? These revolting images are the diet of the pervert and most who regard themselves as libertarian would draw the line here. These images must be kept from impressionable children. We cannot have them fixating on filth. In the case of pornographic imagery on the Internet children are often the viewers of such. Where pornography on videos or in magazines is concerned viewing *can* be a personal and subjective choice. Such material can be placed on a high shelf, available to adults but out of reach of children. In this instance a child and even an adult would have to go to some length to gain access. This puts a natural restriction on obscene imagery but allows those requiring it to avail of same. SurfWatch has provided us with a device to block out unwanted imagery which we will deal with more fully later.

The Internet is proving almost impossible to control whilst still retaining the need for 'free speech'. Yet,

> Supporters of the planned law, eager not to be perceived to be opposing America's most treasured constitutional right, say the restrictions would apply only to graphic or explicit material deemed to possess neither literary, nor artistic, nor social value.

(Independent on Sunday 3.12.1995) How do we decide who should regulate and control imagery on the Internet? Why should one person's pro-censorship values outweigh another's anti-censorship stance? The Internet's purpose is to supply anyone with information, offensive or not. To suppress this suppresses self-expression. Censorship can take away one's ability to think and find out about matters. It can deprive one of experiences and development of thoughts. In some cases, however, this freedom can hinder the protection of children and perhaps, therefore, some freedoms should be curtailed.

SOLUTIONS

According to John Gilmore of the Electronic Frontier Foundation - "The Internet treats censorship just like any other glitch; it routes around it". There are sure to be ways of accessing pornography through the Internet despite governmental control. As long as we have people who request erotic images, others will produce them and they will find their way through the Internet.

What may be required is an international agreement on regulation. The Internet is a world-wide communication device and to censor imagery in one area will not work due to Internet links between countries. Furthermore to cut links with foreign Internets is to limit the rights of foreigners and of the citizens of the "censored country".

A development in Germany provides an example of this type of censorship. The authorities there forced CompuServe, a provider of Internet to 140 countries, to ban access to over 200 areas of the Net. CompuServe explained that "its technology did not allow it to block these items from German users only but that it was investigating ways of doing this". (F. O Marcaigh, Irish Times 8.1.1995). William Gyles, a company spokesman said "It's a huge global market and in order to play in each country we have to play by their rules".

Another example of government control comes from China. "In June, China's Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Wu Jichuan, said the government would limit access of Chinese users 'to some Internet information'.... 'By linking with the Internet we do not mean the absolute freedom of information'".
(F. O Marcaigh, Irish Times 8.1.1995)
This has implications for Hong Kong in 1997.

The Religious Alliance against Pornography have come up with some hardhitting ideas for solving the problem of hard-core and child pornography.

1. Those who attempt to introduce it should be liable to prosecution and sanctions should apply to computer networks which knowingly carry it.

2. Computer bulletin boards should be subject to the same regulations and restrictions as a medium like TV.

3. Bulletin board providers must guarantee that children may not register as subscribers.

4. Legislation must be enacted which makes illegal the down-loading of child and hard-core pornography onto hard discs, and any individual holding such material on hard disc is a potential pornography distributor.

Advanced technology has given birth to the Internet and perhaps we can look to technology for assistance in solving the problem presented by the availability of child-porn. Better software tools may be the answer and one such is SurfWatch. It is inexpensive, ($49.95) and prevents access to more than 1000 sexually explicit world-wide pages, gopher sites, chat lines and newsgroups. Owners of this program can add and remove Internet sites at their discretion. For an extra $5.95 per month blocked sites can be automatically updated. According to Bill Duval, CEO. of SurfWatch Software, "SurfWatch is the first product created to make access to inappropriate material a matter of personal choice, creating a true alternative to Internet censorship".

The arrival on the market of better software tools means that parents can now discharge their responsibility to censor their children's viewing. They are the key agents in the struggle to protect children whilst also allowing adults freedom of choice. According to John Perry Barlow, co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, "If you don't want your children fixating on filth better step up to the tough task of raising them to find it as distasteful as you do yourself.

(Philip Elmer-Dewitt, Time Magazine)

L. Allison and R. Baxter of Monash University have come up with a proposal which, if realised, would complement the SurfWatch blocking product. They propose that providers of information *optionally* classify the content of their own material in accurate and machine readable terms. Socially responsible authors will classify their material correctly. This is in their interests as unclassified material can be automatically censored. It is proposed that items be *optionally* signed with a secure digital signature that can be traced back to a real person, company or organisation.

> The effect of the proposal is to allow individuals to set their browsers to filter the material they are to access. Conservative readers can chose to avoid documents falling outside their target classes. More liberal readers might access material with no classification despite the possibility of potentially offensive contents.

("Protecting Our Innocents" L. Allison & R. Baxter, Monash University, 2 June, 1995)

This proposal if used in conjunction with the SurfWatch blocking product seems a positive and effective alternative to government censorship. It allows freedom of choice and speech. It is then the parents' choice rather than the government's to decide whether their children's viewing should be censored or not. Perhaps parents who allow their children to be exposed to certain types of material, should be held legally answerable for it.

CONCLUSION

Pornography is widely available and accessible and this is a source of worry to many and especially to feminists. While governments, and parents generally, are perturbed at the potentially damaging effect on the minds of both adults and minors, feminists worry about the effect on the perception of women in society. They feel that the portrayal of womankind at the hands of the pornographer results in violence towards them.

MacKinnon and Dworkin advocate censorship as the answer but other women see the solution in the retention of free speech which would be an invaluable tool in the quest for equality. These latter maintain that women should reject the subordinate role prescribed for them by society and adopt a militant attitude which would see them produce their own brand of pornography and interpret sex for themselves.

The feminist debate has been overshadowed by the more demanding problem of cyberporn. To merely theorise about pornography is no longer acceptable: decisive steps are called for. To simply impose strict regulations and ban such material will not suffice. The passing of the Communications Decency Act and the ensuing debate show that fundamental freedoms are endangered. The failure of the Minneapolis Ordinance to achieve results and the

constitutional challenge to the C.D.A. indicate we may have to look to voluntary action rather than coercion to protect the minds of minors and adults.

The Internet is a powerful medium with a vast potential for good or evil. Pornographic books and magazines can be kept out of reach of children, x-rated films can be shown late at night, but the Internet is a 24-hour service which can enter the home where children have access. The material carried is becoming more and more violent and revolting, in response to demand. Surveys prove that children exposed to such are influenced and become addicted.

Society cannot stand idly by and witness the slide into depravity. The stance adopted must take account of many viewpoints and decide whether the approach of the pro-censorship lobby or of the libertarians prevails. Freedom of choice was paramount but now the protection of society must take pride of place. High technology software solves the dilemma. SurfWatch have produced a device which can filter out objectionable material and parents can decide what their children may access on the Net. If parents can be persuaded to take advantage of this new development we will have the best of both worlds - protection of children and an acceptable alternative to government censorship.

APPENDIX

The following is a list of the most frequently downloaded files of the Amateur Action BBS for each of the classifications discussed in this study, ('Marketing Pornography on the Information Superhighway' - Carnegie Mellon University) as of May 1994. [149] It reveals not only the popularity of particular imagery, but also the power of the linguistic parsing software developed for this study. The words in boldface indicate how the computer dictionary parsed the descriptions to the proper caterory.

Category "AMAZING":
NASTY NASTY! I WILL NOT DESCRIBE THIS KINKY NASTY GIF!
Downloads: 368
filed under: AMAZING
PARAPHILIA

Category ANAL:
Brunette coed has tiny boobs! 3 inch wide cock in her ass
Downloads: 232
filed under: ANAL
HARD-CORE

Category ASIAN:
Oriental girl inserts her fist in friend's pussy, Ass dildo!
Downloads: 365
filed under: ASIAN, FISTING, FOREIGN OBJECTS, ANAL
PARAPHILIA

Category BESTIALITY:
BRUNETTE SLUT TAKES A HUGE HORSE COCK IN HER TIGHT PUSSY!
Downloads: 672
filed under: BESTIALITY, WHORE/SLUT
PARAPHILIA

Category B&D/S&M:
SUPER TORTURE! PIERCED CLIT! PUSSY NAILED TO A TABLE!
Downloads: 297
filed under: B&D/S&M
PARAPHILIA

Category BREAST:
2 Firm breasted fresh amateurs! Super cute and big nipples!
Downloads: 868
filed under: BREAST
SOFT-CORE

Category CUMSHOTS:
More amateur CUM! D/L this messy GIF now!
Downloads: 201
filed under: CUMSHOTS
HARD-CORE

Category CUNNILINGUS:
He pulls her panties aside and eats her hairless twat!
Downloads: 22
Filed under: CUNNILINGUS
HARD-CORE

Category DOGSTYLE:
Stereo GIF! Juliet loves to take big cock doggy style!
Downloads: 42
filed under: DOGSTYLE
HARD-CORE
Category OBESE:
PRIVATE FAT CHICK GIF! THIS IS MUCH TOO NASTY TO DESCRIBE!
Downloads: 68
filed under: FAT
PARAPHILIA
Category FELLATIO:
Cum squirts from his uncut big cock into her mouth!
Downloads: 234
filed under: FELLATIO
HARD-CORE
Category FISTING:
She inserts her whole fist in her girlfriend's pussy!
Downloads: 494
filed under: FISTING, LESBIAN
PARAPHILIA
Category HOMOSEXUAL:
KINKY AND NASTY GAY BUTTFUCK GIF! D/L NOW IF YOU LIKE KINK!
Downloads: 180
filed under: HOMOSEXUAL
HARD-CORE
Category SHAVED-PUBIC:
CLOSE-UP! TINY HAIRLESS TWAT! TAKEN BY A HORNY PEDIATRICIAN!
Downloads: 178
filed under: SHAVED-PUBIC
SOFT-CORE

It is instructive to notice that this image was not parsed as pedo/hebephile. The words "tiny" and "hairless twat" were used in too many other contexts; the word "pediatrician" was not discovered in the 40,000 image descriptions that were randomly analyzed for the dictionary. Normally, when such exceptions are discovered, they are added to the appropriate category. The word "pediatrician" was intentionally left out to offer the reader an appreciation of the enormous challenges inherent in developing a category dictionary.

Category HAIR COLOR:
Brunette coed caught sunbathing on a balcony: EXCELLENT!
Downloads: 309
filed under: HAIR COLOR, PORTRAITS
SOFT-CORE
Category INCEST:
She holds the dog cock! Inserts in her daughter's ass!
Downloads: 365
filed under: INCEST, BESTIALITY
PARAPHILIA

Category INTER-RACIAL:
New AA girl Montana! A cute black girl with big sexy boobs!
Downloads: 163
filed under: INTER-RACIAL
SOFT-CORE
Category LESBIAN
BLOND OPENS WIDE! HER GIRLFRIEND SHITS IN HER MOUTH! NASTY!
Downloads: 354
filed under: LESBIAN, COPROPHILIA
PARAPHILIA
Category ORGY:
Piss orgy 3 horny guys piss all over their girlfriends!
Downloads: 141
filed under: ORGY, UROPHILIA
PARAPHILIA
Category OUTDOOR:
PRIVATE COLLECTION! SEXY COEDS CAUGHT NAKED ON THE BEACH!
Downloads: 324
filed under: OUTDOOR, PORTRAITS
SOFT-CORE
Category PANTIES:
Super cute Melinda! Nude with her panties at her knees!
Downloads: 176
filed under: PANTIES, PORTRAITS
SOFT-CORE
Category PEDO/HEBEPHILE:
Young amateur teen! no tits at all! She spreads her Pussy!
Downloads: 1687
filed under: PEDO/HEBEPHILE
PEDO/HEBEPHILE
Category PETTING:
Cody is having and Orgasm! Fingers Hole!
Downloads: 138
filed under: PETTING
HARD-CORE
Category PORTRAITS:
Lance White NUDE! D/L This free GIF and DISTRIBUTE FREELY!
Downloads: 301
filed under: PORTRAITS
SOFT-CORE
Category PREGNANT:
Pregnant girl, pants at ankles, spread cunt, milking tits!
Downloads: 246
filed under: PREGNANT
HARD-CORE

Category PROMOTIONAL:
Cindy! Footage from her video! Inserts HUGE 12 inch dong!
Downloads: 150
filed under: PROMOTIONAL
HARD-CORE
Category SERIES:
#1, series of nostalgia nudes! Very sexy!
Downloads: 69
filed under: SERIES
SOFT-CORE
Category SHOWER:
Jasmine and Cindy take a shower and play with each other!
Downloads: 80
filed under: SHOWER, LESBIAN
HARD-CSORE
Category SIXTY NINE:
#43, They are horny! They are in the 69 position!
Downloads: 59
filed under: SIXTY-NINE
HARD-CORE
Category FOREIGN OBJECTS:
Cindy inserts fat cucumber in Jasmine's cunt! She screams!
Downloads: 266
filed under: FOREIGN OBJECTS
PARAPHILIA
Category TRANSSEXUAL:
SEXY SHE-MALES TAKE HUGE COCKS IN THEIR ASSHOLES! D/L NOW!
Downloads: 239
filed under: TRANSSEXUAL
PARAPHILIA
Category VAGINAL:
A super view of an amateur getting fucked real good!
Downloads: 233
filed under: VAGINAL
HARD-CORE
Category VOYEURISM:
College coed runs nude on a stadium field! Guys watch her!
Downloads: 139
filed under: VOYEURISM, PORTRAITS
PARAPHILIA
Category UROPHILIC:
Cindy stands over Jasmine and PISSES on her face: PEE PEE!
Downloads: 607
filed under: UROPHILIA
PARAPHILIA
Category WHORE/SLUT:
Super slut! Her girlfriend squats and pisses in her mouth!
Downloads: 319
filed under: WHORE/SLUT, UROPHILIA
PARAPHILIA

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