Countering Hate on the Internet

raphael cohen-almagor, University of Hull
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Raphael Cohen-Almagor


All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.

Edmund Burke (1729 - 1797)

Abstract

Hate speech is designed to threaten certain groups publicly and act as propaganda for offline organizations. Hate groups use websites to share ideology and propaganda, to link to similar sites and to recruit new converts, advocate violence and to threat others. The aim of this paper is to analyse the ways hate mongers are utilizing the Internet, and to ask what can be done to counter their activities. The paper discusses the targets of hate on the Internet and offers practical proposals to address this increasing problem and fight against it.

Keywords: Hate speech, Internet, bigotry, Nethate, ISPs, social responsibility, Aristotle

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1 I thank Richard Collin for many constructive comments.
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Introduction

The Internet provides cheap, instantaneous and anonymous distribution that can be easily downloaded and posted in multiple places. The transnational nature of the World-Wide-Web, its vast content, the fact that it has no central management or coordination, and that the routing computers do not retain copies of the packets they handle provide ample opportunities for people to exploit the Net’s massive potential to enhance partisan interests, some of which are harmful and anti-social, thus undermining people’s sense of trust in the Net. The problem is presented by the relatively small number of people who abuse the Net to harm others.

Hate speech is defined as a bias-motivated, hostile, malicious speech aimed at a person or a group of people because of some of their actual or perceived innate characteristics. It expresses discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving, antagonistic and/or prejudicial attitudes toward those characteristics which include sex, race, religion, ethnicity, colour, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. Hate speech is intended to injure, dehumanize, harass, debase, degrade, and/or victimise the targeted groups, and to foment insensitivity and brutality towards them. A hate site is defined as a site that carries any form of hate: textual, visual, or audio-based rhetoric.

This essay is the second in a trilogy of essays on Nethate. The first essay analysed the ways Nethate can be countered from the perspective of ethics, or rather applied ethics. It discussed the problem in the context of moral and social responsibility, a neglected perspective in the New Media literature.\(^2\) This essay addresses the ethical problems rooted in technology in response to potential risks on the Internet. The Internet is not the problem. The problem arises where it is utilised to undermine our well-being as autonomous beings.

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living in free societies. While using the first essay as a point of departure, this essay explains who are the targets of hate on the Internet and offers practical proposals to counter Nethate.

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Hate on the World Wide Web began on January 11, 1995 when Don Black established his Stormfront site.³ Stormfront claims to have more than 250,000 members who read its vast resources, interact on its various forums and tune in to its radio program.⁴ Racist leaders such as David Duke and Don Black have vainly tried to burnish the reputation of the Klan; to replace the stereotyped image of “ignorant yokels in sheets” with one of scrubbed, educated, articulate, earnest young white men.⁵ Black said: “The Internet is that opportunity we’ve been looking for ... We never were able to reach the audience that we can now so easily and inexpensively”.⁶

For many American bigots, the most hated group is the conspirators, i.e. the Jews. The Jews are united by a secret pact to set in motion a global conspiracy to rule the world. The Jews lie in order to achieve this aim and are successful in brainwashing the minds of Christian-Americans. They control the academia, the media, the banks, MTV, the feminists. The Jews control America and the world (ZOG=Zionist Occupied Government).⁷ Who Rules America? by the Research Staff of National Vanguard Magazine concludes:

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The Jew-controlled entertainment media have taken the lead in persuading a whole generation that homosexuality is a normal and acceptable way of life; that there is nothing at all wrong with White women dating or marrying Black men, or with White men marrying Asian women; that all races are inherently equal in ability and character -- except that the character of the White race is suspect because of a history of oppressing other races; and that any effort by Whites at racial self-preservation is reprehensible. We must oppose the further spreading of this poison among our people, and we must break the power of those who are spreading it... Once we have absorbed and understood the fact of Jewish media control, it is our inescapable responsibility to do whatever is necessary to break that control. We must shrink from nothing in combating this evil power that has fastened its deadly grip on our people and is injecting its lethal poison into their minds and souls. If we fail to destroy it, it certainly will destroy our race (emphasis in original text).  

African Americans also constitute an enemy. African Americans are seen as brutal, primitive and biologically inferior whose presence represents a corrosive element for the whole of American society. They are portrayed as African cannibals bringing a jungle culture to America. They are referred to as “niggers”, “mud people”, source of social pollution and cultural decadence which clashes with the ethnic, civil and economic superiority of the whites.

Another hated group is the homosexual community. They are portrayed as seeking to sexually ensnare young white males. This behaviour is contra nature, perverted, sinful, morally abominable, threatens to undermine the religious values of the white community.

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Homosexuals do not reproduce and thus threaten the survival of their own race. Furthermore, they spread contagious and deadly diseases and are no less than angels of death. They should be hunted down in the same way witches were once hunted in Europe.\textsuperscript{10}

Here is one illustration:

My church (Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas) engages in daily, peaceful sidewalk demonstrations opposing the homosexual lifestyle of soul-damning, nation-destroying filth. We display large colorful signs containing Bible words and sentiments, including: GOD HATES FAGS, FAGS HATE GOD, AIDS CURES FAGS, THANK GOD FOR AIDS, FAGS BURN IN HELL, NO TEARS FOR QUEERS, SIN &; SHAME NOT PRIDE, FAG=ANAL SEX=DEATH, FAG=AIDS=DEATH, GOD IS NOT MOCKED, FAGS ARE NATURE FREAKS, GOD GAVE FAGS UP, NO SPECIAL LAWS FOR FAGS, etc.\textsuperscript{11}

The elaborate hate sites hate African-Americans and non-white immigrants, Muslims, Jews and gays. They are quite eclectic, offering wide array of racial publications.\textsuperscript{12} Some of them publish in a number of languages. Stormfront contains discussions in many European languages.\textsuperscript{13} Extensive websites contain documents, journals, newspapers, videos, radio, TV shows, books, games, survival information, homeschooling information, cartoons, artwork, jokes, quotes, poems, free stickers and merchandise. In addition, there are also anti-religious sites,\textsuperscript{14} anti-abortion,\textsuperscript{15} anti-liberal, anti-Communist and anti-feminist sites.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{10} http://www.anti-gay.com; see also Antonio Roversi, \textit{Hate on the Net} (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 94.


\textsuperscript{12} See, for instance, The Racial Nationalist Library, http://www.racerealist.com/1b.htm

\textsuperscript{13} http://www.stormfront.org/forum/

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The expansive, harmful and pervasive nature of the Internet calls for some responsible regulation. Fighting speech with more speech might not be a sufficient answer.\textsuperscript{17} In the


\textsuperscript{17} See \textit{United States v. Machado} 195 F.3d 454 (9th Cir. 1999) involving the conviction of an expelled college student who on September 20, 1996 sent threatening e-mail message to 60 Asian students: "I personally will make it my life career to find and kill everyone one [sic] of you personally". Machado was sentenced to a one-year term of imprisonment, to be followed by a one-year period of supervised release.
following discussion I wish to outline all that can be done to encounter Nethate. The challenge is formidable. The Internet did not create a new phenomenon. Instead, the Internet amplifies the hate phenomenon and became a useful asset for hate mongers. Once we acknowledge the problem we need to promote standards of moral and social responsibility to counter it. One measure is not enough. Instead, we need to resort to a combined action that would provide ample answer to the challenges we face.

**Speech v. Speech** – This is the favourite American response, espoused by many Internet experts and human rights activists who argue that the way to tackle hate on the Net is by more communication, by openness and by exposing the problem.\(^{18}\) We need to show that all human beings deserve respect and concern, all have dignity, and that a racially based society negates liberal-democratic values that we all hold dear: pluralism, diversity, individuality, liberty, equality, tolerance, justice.\(^{19}\) Counter-speech includes expressive support for the targets of hate, highlighting the values of tolerance, pluralism, individualism and respect for others.

However, what are we to do, for instance, if we try to persuade a hate monger, who calls on his website that homosexuals are immoral, social deviant, dangerous to little children, to show homosexuals more respect by offering eloquent reasoning but receive no reaction from the hate monger? He continues to name his target of hate, providing details about gay bars and publishing information and “advice” as to how to deal with gay people who “spread malicious disease”. Should we opt for more words, and only to words? Realizing that the reasoning falls on deaf ears, should we simply surrender and raise our hands in despair while allowing the hateful messages to continue their vile circulation? Those who restrain themselves to speech as a comprehensive solution effectively desert a


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weak party in society who deserves protection. Their restraint might cost life. Gay hatred has led to murder. In the United States during 2011 alone there were 30 cases of fatally violent hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender victims.\textsuperscript{20} This price is much too high and unaffordable. In such circumstances, when the threat is real and viable, the balance should sway in the direction of preserving human life, at the expense of free expression.

\textbf{Education} — activity at primary and high schools alerting about hate on the Internet; its forms and attractions (music, video games, activities for kids); why racism is logically incoherent, empirically unattainable, anti-democratic and inhumane; why it is harmful; who is targeted; history of hate and the connection between hate and some of the most horrific human catastrophes men inflicted upon other men.

In the USA, Partners Against Hate, an innovative collaboration of the Anti-Defamation League, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, and the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence, offers promising education and counteraction strategies for young people and the wide range of community-based professionals who work and interact with youth, including parents, law enforcement officials, educators, and community/business leaders.\textsuperscript{21} In turn, Family Online Safety Institute focuses on making the online safer for kids through the promotion of best practices, tools and education.\textsuperscript{22}


\textsuperscript{21} http://www.partnersagainsthate.org/about_pah/index.html; Partners Against Hate \textit{et al.}, \textit{Investigating Hate Crimes on the Internet} (Washington DC., September 2003); interview with Mr. Brian Marcus, former ADL Director of Internet Monitoring, Washington DC (April 16, 2008).
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Another organization is Enough is Enough which developed a multimedia learning series to help teach parents and other caregivers about Internet dangers and how to protect their children. AOL was a National launch partner for this initiative.23 AOL was a party to another initiative called Take25, initiated by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. The goal of Take 25 is to heighten awareness about children’s safety issues. With a focus on prevention, the campaign encourages parents, guardians, and other trusted-adult role models to spend time talking to kids and teaching them ways to be safer.24

Adopting and enforcing school, university and workplace policies – institutions and organizations should adopt policies that exclude hate and bigotry off and online. They should ascertain that their computers are not used for purposes that are incompatible with these policies. Students and workers should not abuse their time at the education system and at the workplace and exploit the technology that is made available to them to preach hatred against others, or to engage in expressions that contravene and undermine civility and respect for others. Hate is destructive. There is no reason to provide scope for hate speech in schools and the workplace.

Netcitizenship – the term “Netcitizenship” means good citizenship on the Internet. It is about developing responsible modes of conduct when surfing the Internet which include positive contributions to debates and discussions, and raising caution and alarm against dangerous Net expressions. Netcitizenship encourages counter-speech against hate speech, working together to provide a safe and comfortable virtual community, free of intimidation and bigotry. One example is Wipeout Homophobia (WHOF) which was

22 http://www.fosi.org/cms
24 http://www.take25.org/page.asp?page=47
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originated as a response to gay hatred on the Internet. Wipeout Homophobia provides communal support and promotes a vision of a more tolerant and just world.\textsuperscript{25} In 2012, this Facebook page had more than 300,000 members and 6 million visitors.\textsuperscript{26} Kevin “Kel” O’Neil, WHOF’s creator, explained:

WHOF, all started on the 9th May 2010. During a search for a gay group I found two hate pages. They only had a few members, but all I could think was what if one of my family found this page and read the hate speech. I decided to "report" both pages. Hate speech is illegal in most of the free world and is also against Facebook’s own terms of use. I sent links to the pages to some friends so they too could report them, they replied with links to others I thought that rather than 30 of us sending each other messages, I would collate the links on one Facebook page. An hour later there were hundreds of members and by the end of the day a thousand had joined, today there are over 310,000 members.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{ISPs' responsibility} – ISPs and web-hosting companies should develop standards for responsible and acceptable practices for Net users. They should adopt clear and transparent hate speech policies and include them in their terms of service. ISPs should also devise friendly and easy-to-use mechanisms for Netusers to report violations of their terms of service. With continued development of technical solutions and innovation and with increased awareness of and adherence to basic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) we

\textsuperscript{25}Wipeout Homophobia, https://www.facebook.com/WOH247
\textsuperscript{26} “Wipeout Homophobia On Facebook Surpasses 6 Million Visitors!”, Addicting Info (February 7, 2012), http://www.addictinginfo.org/2012/02/07/wipeout-homophobia-on-facebook-surpasses-6-million-visitors/
\textsuperscript{27} “Wipeout Homophobia On Facebook Surpasses 6 Million Visitors!”, Addicting Info (February 7, 2012), http://www.addictinginfo.org/2012/02/07/wipeout-homophobia-on-facebook-surpasses-6-million-visitors/
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will assure a certain security level on the Internet, like in any other industry. What is required is more structure. CSR should be part of the web company’s strategy, in the frame of mind of the day-to-day operations. Indeed, CSR is a continuous living process. In this context, CSR scholar Keith Davis asserts that it is a firm’s obligation to consider the effects of its decisions on society in a manner that will accomplish social benefits as well as traditional economic benefits. This means that “social responsibility begins where the law ends. A firm is not being socially responsible if it merely complies with the minimum requirements of the law, because this is what any good citizen would do”.

The main principles of Corporate Social Responsibility dictate integrated, sustainable decision-making which takes into consideration the positive and negative potential consequences of decisions; obligations on the part of corporations not only to consider different stakeholders and interests but also to incorporate them into the decision-making processes; transparency that is vital for ensuring accountability to stakeholders; liability for decisions and enactment of remedial measures to redress harm inflicted as a result of conduct. Thus social responsibility should influence ISPs and web-hosting companies to

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scrutinize their servers, verifying that they do not become hubs for hate and bigotry. ISPs’ terms of service usually grant ISPs with the unilateral right and ability to block service to those who violate the terms. ISPs are reluctant to do this as they wish to maintain business. They are for profit. However, there were instances in which ISPs denied service, commonly due to violation of copyrights. For instance, if someone complains about copyright violation, the ISP will take the material off the server. ISPs are inclined to abide by such requests.31

In May 2012, WordPress took down the Greek neo-Nazi Golden Dawn Party, which won nearly seven percent of the vote in the May elections due to violation of WordPress Terms of Service.32 The hosting service bars sites that include "hate content" or "contain threats or incite violence towards individuals or entities".33

Affecting search engines results -- If you Google the words “Martin Luther King”, one of the first results you will receive is http://www.martinlutherking.org/, a hate site masquerading as an objective historical source about the American human rights leader. High school students who are asked to conduct research on the life and leadership of Mr King are likely to come across this site. Some of them might think this is a legitimate site, with credible eye-opener information. The Google algorithm used to determine search ranking does not evaluate the accuracy of information thus the site’s high ranking can potentially mislead many users, especially young users who conduct their very first research.

Google was under pressure to manipulate its search engine so as to boost or reduce websites’ page ranking. The controversy revolved around http://www.jewwatch.com/, which

31 Interview with Dr. Herb Lin, National Academy of Sciences, Washington DC (May 15, 2008).

32 “This blog has been archived or suspended for a violation of our Terms of Service. For questions or concerns, contact WordPress.com Support”. See http://xryshaygh.wordpress.com/

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sometimes was ranked first if you searched the word “Jew”. Thousand of netusers petitioned Google to remove the site.34 Stormfront happily announced “Jewwatch number 1 ranked google site for search ‘jew’” and called upon its readers: “EVERYBODY GOOGLE JEWWATCH. Thanks!”35

In October 2011, I met Yoram Elkaim, Head of Google Legal - Southern Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa. He explained that Google does not think that it should be the judge of free speech online. Google believes in free speech and tolerance. It is mobilized to fight against ignorance by informing the people, providing them with information and digitise world-leading libraries. Google brought the Harvard library to Africa. Google also supported the digitization of the Yad Vashem archives, dedicated to educating people about the Holocaust. Google also sponsors events against violence and extremism. The company certainly strives to exclude illegal content from the Net. Elkaim emphasized that Google’s job is to provide relevant information. Google is to inform the people, not to misinform. Google aims to provide correct information and does it best not to play into the hands of people who try to game the system by excessively affecting the Google ranking algorithm. I asked Elkaim how it happened that Google ranks Jewwatch in the third place if it aims to provide relevant information. Does he think that the Jewwatch information is relevant to those who seek information about Jews, true or correct in one way or another? To my surprise, Elkaim was not familiar with the Jewwatch controversy.36

The controversy prompted Google to issue a statement about Offensive Search Results in which Google explains its policy, saying that this policy does not aim to offend or disturb or to endorse racist views:

35 http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=580655
36 Discussion with Yoram Elkaim, Paris (October 10, 2011).
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A site’s ranking in Google’s search results relies heavily on computer algorithms using thousands of factors to calculate a page’s relevance to a given query. Sometimes subtleties of language cause anomalies to appear that cannot be predicted. A search for “Jew” brings up one such unexpected result. If you use Google to search for "Judaism", "Jewish" or "Jewish people", the results are informative and relevant. So why is a search for "Jew" different? One reason is that the word "Jew" is often used in an anti-Semitic context. Jewish organizations are more likely to use the word "Jewish" when talking about members of their faith.37

Google explains that someone who is searching for information on Jewish people would be more likely to enter terms like “Judaism”, "Jewish people", or "Jews" than the single word "Jew". As Google views the comprehensiveness of the search results as an extremely important priority, it does not remove a page from search results simply because its content is unpopular or because the company receives complaints concerning it. Google, however, removes pages from search results if it is believed that the page or its site violates the Webmaster Guidelines, if required to do so by law, or at the request of the webmaster who is responsible for the page.38

Labelling, naming and shaming — Web-hosting companies like First Amendment,39 Go Daddy40 and Xanga (blog hosting)41 that are friendly to racial propaganda with clear-eyed akrasia should be named and shamed. The present host of Stormfront is a Texan company

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37 Google, An explanation of our search results, at http://www.google.com/explanation.html
38 Ibid.
39 http://www.1stamendment-hosting.com/
41 http://www.xanga.com/
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called The Planet that has very lose Terms of Service that would allow anything that is legal. The First Amendment and profit conveniently go hand in hand. Social responsibility and respect for people are secondary.

It is interesting to see how Nazi sites explain and propagate their business on the Internet by advising interested parties to open their business in the USA, as there they will not be prosecuted. For instance, http://www.zensurfrei.com/:

Secure Websites in the USA!

175MB web-site + 8GB data transfer per month + ten genuine POP3 email addresses. Domain Name registration is FREE for first year! - No setup charge! No registration charge! Only 20,00 €/month (US$20.00/month), ie 60,00 €/quarter (US$60.00/quarter)!

ANONYMOUS WEB-SITES ARE POSSIBLE! The domain name is registered in the name of a U.S. firm. Even our firm does not need to know your identity. (Payment can be sent with an anonymous letter with reference to your web-site.)

Political repression is increasing in Europe! European webmasters can reduce their risk by moving their web-sites to the USA! ZENSURFREI establishes your web-site with one of the largest and most reliable servers in the USA. Pay by the quarter or by the year. We accept Euro banknotes or US Dollar banknotes, no coins.

42 http://content.theplanet.com/Documents/legal/Planet-TOS.pdf. Senior ADL directors spoke with the owner of The Planet. To no avail. They said it was a waste of time. Discussion with senior ADL directors, New York (March 22, 2010).

43 This is followed by an endorsement: “A customer writes: You should mention at zensurfrei.com that your web-hosting packages include many features (Frontpage-Extensions, PHP-Support, CGI-Support, accessibility via Web-File-Manager, FTP & Frontpage, exact Urchin-Report-statistics etc.) all of that is not self-evident!!!”. See zensurfrei.com.
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International cooperation – In Europe, a continent that suffered a great deal from the horror of hate and bigotry, much less tolerance is afforded to such phenomenon compared to the United States. In 1996, a governmental organization in Germany, Jugendschutz.net, and a non-governmental organization in the Netherlands, Stichting Magenta, Meldpunt Discriminatie Internet, were the first organizations in the world to start a dedicated team to address the problems of racism, anti-Semitism, hate against Muslims, gays, and other discrimination or incitement to hatred, each in their own country. In 2002, they founded the International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH). The vision of INACH is “the international co-operation between complaints bureaus against discrimination, which allows the sharing of knowledge, the exchange of best practices and coordinated measures against hate speech, promoting respect, citizenship and responsibility, enabling Internet users to exercise their right of freedom of speech with respect for the rights and reputations of others, and to freely use the Internet without experiencing cyber hate.” The mission of INACH is to unite and empower organizations fighting cyber hate, to create awareness and promote attitude change about on-line discrimination and to reinforce the rights of all Internet users. INACH monitors the Internet and publishes overviews and reports about the situation in different countries. Today, the network consists of eighteen organizations in Europe and North America. INACH acts as an umbrella organization for hotlines specializing in racist and hateful content.

Other notable organizations fighting against hate are LICRA and the Centre Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI). LICRA is the French International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l’Antisémitisme). It was created in May 1926 in Paris. LICRA fights discrimination, racism and xenophobia especially as they are manifested on the electronic and print media. CIDI is

45 http://www.inach.net/mission.html
46 http://www.licra.org/
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the Netherlands’ prime source of information about Israel and the Jewish people. CIDI has published instructions explaining how to get anti-Semitic material removed from the Internet. CIDI believes that individual surfers have a responsibility to take action against hate.47

Publishing overviews and reports on a regular basis — publishing names of hate sites, highlights of their content, their locations, their ISPs, both successful and unsuccessful attempts to curtail their activities.

One example comes from a report on anti-Semitism on the Internet by Deborah Stone of the Australian B’nai B’rith Anti Defamation Commission. This report examines the sources of the problem and considers the possibilities for controlling Internet hate. It explores the regulatory context in Australia and the models available in other jurisdictions. Stone argues for a multi-pronged approach to fighting anti-Semitism and racism on the Internet including developing positive web-based resources, utilising search engines, working with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and developers to improve tools available, engaging in web-based dialogue and developing resources to support critical thinking, values education and defensive behaviours. The report further argues for the extension of Australian Internet regulation to include hate, and warns regulation alone is unable to stop the tide of hate now being disseminated.48

Law and adherence to international conventions -- On global issues such as hate there is a need for international cooperation to respond to global concerns. As the Internet is an international medium, countries realize the urgency for transnational coordination.

47 www.cidi.nl

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The Ministerial Council Decision 9/09 of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) of December 2, 2009, on Combating Hate Crimes calls on the participating States “to seek opportunities to co-operate and thereby address the increasing use of the Internet to advocate views constituting an incitement to bias-motivated violence including hate crimes and, in so doing, to reduce the harm caused by the dissemination of such material, while ensuring that any relevant measures taken are in line with OSCE commitments, in particular with regard to freedom of expression”.49

Conclusion

The Internet is a vast ocean of knowledge, data, ideologies and propaganda. It is omnipresent, interactive, fast and decentralized. The ease of access to the Internet, its low cost and speed, its chaotic structure (or lack of structure), the anonymity which individuals and groups may enjoy, and the international character of the world-wide-web furnish all kinds of individuals and organizations an easy and effective arena for their partisan interests. The Internet contains some of the best written products of humanity, and some of the worst ones.

The Internet, of course, does not exist within a vacuum. Education on all levels about the values that underpin liberal society – respect for others and not harming others – are of vital importance, and so is the discussion about the evil of racism and bigotry. This issue, however, merits a different, comprehensive discussion. The focus of this paper is on the Internet, where Netusers are able to upload information themselves quickly without any editorial filter or criticism; thus the medium is saturated with content that would unlikely be entertained by conventional media. The Internet serves the positive and negative elements in society. Finding the right balance between free speech and responsible speech requires

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societal efforts that involve multiple stakeholders in communication technologies at the society at large including the education system and the workplace.

Aristotle’s Rule of the Golden Mean is a good guide for liberal democracies: For every polarity there is a mean which when practiced are good benchmarks for a life of moderation. The more we see the Golden Mean in each polarity, the better we find the true benchmarks of a life of wellness. People have the freedom to express themselves, within reason. Some ISPs exhibit irresponsible akrasia in the face of Nethate. To address the challenge of hate on the Net there is a need to exchange information in order to enhance the effectiveness of human rights-ISPs-State cooperation; lobby for international awareness about the harms and abuse of technology; helping support groups and institutions that want to set up tip-lines alerting about hate; advance our knowledge of emerging social networking and the psychology of people who use the Internet for various purposes. Clearly, there is a lot to learn about Net human behaviour and what can be done to increase moral and social responsibility of all parties concerned. Hate poses a serious challenge calling for serious consideration and redeeming answers. Responsible ISPs and web-hosting companies should weigh one against the other freedom of expression and social responsibility, investing in more efforts to eradicate Nethate from their services.

Acting responsibly requires updating and adapting our theoretical frameworks and vocabularies to new circumstances and innovation as well as devising counter-measures to challenges and anti-social behavior. Doing so supplies us with conceptual and practical instruments with which we are better fitted to approach contemporary social problems.

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Luciano Floridi envisages a steady increase in agents’ responsibilities. I hope he is correct in his observation. We can reasonably expect people to know the difference between good and evil, and then to act accordingly. Technical solutions can be engineered if all involved parties recognize the challenges and cooperate to overcome them.

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Raphael Cohen-Almagor (DPhil., St. Catherine’s College, Oxford) is an educator, researcher, human rights activist, Chair in Politics and Director of the Middle East Study Group, University of Hull, the UK, http://www2.hull.ac.uk/fass/me-study-group.aspx. He was Visiting Professor at UCLA and Johns Hopkins, and Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, Washington DC. In 2003-2007, he was the Founding Director of the Center for Democratic Studies, University of Haifa, Israel. Raphael published extensively in the fields of politics, philosophy, law and ethics. Among his more recent books are The Right to Die with Dignity (2001), Speech, Media and Ethics (2001, 2005), Euthanasia in the Netherlands (2004), and The Scope of Tolerance (2006, 2007). Twitter: @almagor35; Web: http://www.hull.ac.uk/rca. Blog: http://almagor.blogspot.com