

Semiotic Morass

by finch *Thursday, Jan 17 2008, 10:34pm*

international / social/political / commentary

There's a lot of well written stuff out there; no one can claim defeat if the British and Australian governments feel it necessary to filter the free flow of information on the internet. Of course all such idiotic measures are doomed to failure as were measures employed to prevent the spread of books after the printing revolution (hundreds of years ago). Nevertheless, the same ignorant forces exist today as [they once did] in the dim, dark, past.

Censorship leads to accelerated dissemination but don't tell the morons in government, we wouldn't want to shock them with reality or the historical record.

The stupidity of government today is actually greater than yesterday, as fast and free info IS today's SOCIAL REALITY, ask anyone that doesn't have their head stuck in their arse!

I salute all social networking sites, blogs and other independent media; the mark of success is the perceived need of governments to stem the flow of free speech -- it's a double irony as it is the democratic nations that have begun to implement these medieval strategies.

Censorship is unnecessary, as frenetic activity on the 'wire' has obscured the fact the tidal wave of information hasn't translated into ACTION -- criminal governments continue to rampage with impunity! That is a massive failure; information has not translated into action as it once did, why? Perhaps old Marshall M got it right, the medium has become the message. If the medium displaces/becomes the message then the message becomes impotent/ineffectual as is clearly evident today. The sheer abundance and availability of info is overwhelming; as each day passes availability increases exponentially.

Some writers are beginning to experience an odd nostalgia for the single word loaded with meaningful import/ACTION; the "CHARGE" of the cavalry for example or the power of an aphorism.

In the semiotic sense the single word is also displaced by more powerful signs and symbols, a raised flag, a national emblem, a shield that is able to rally nations!

It is possible the internet has become its own worst enemy, the abundance of info has diluted the power of the message. As I write and post so do thousands of others yet the audience remains relatively stable - perhaps there are more messages today than people on the planet, who knows, but a quick trip around the net would seem to verify the assumption.

Surrounded by a textual forest I have become a semiotic archaeologist; occasionally I rediscover the power of simple words like, FUCK, KILL, and LOVE but my favourite is - PEACE!

The sheer density of available words all vying for recognition allow none to retain sufficient meaning or power to be effective any longer yet the vacuum-heads believe they need to stem the flow of information.

The internet has done us another service by identifying governments too stupid to govern!

UK Says It Wants to Tackle Net Terror

by Raphael G. Satter

LONDON (AP) — Britain's top law-and-order official wants extremist content off the Web, saying Thursday she intends to deny Islamist ideologues the use of a key recruitment tool.

But Internet service providers and experts say they could be accused of corporate censorship and face a mess of lawsuits if they must carry out any government order to aggressively police the Internet.

British Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, giving the keynote speech at a conference on radicalization and political violence, said "the Internet is not a no-go area for government." She compared her government's plan to counter extremism on the Internet to its long-standing campaign against pedophiles and child pornography online.

"If we are ready and willing to take action to stop the grooming of vulnerable young people on social-networking sites, then I believe we should also take action against those who groom vulnerable people for the purposes of violent extremism.

"Where there is illegal material on the Net, I want it removed," she said.

But how? And who would do the removing? Smith did not go into details, saying only that she was working closely with the communications industry. Service providers, for their part, were not enthusiastic.

Britain's Internet Service Provider Association, which represents major service providers such as BT Group PLC and the U.K. arms of Time Warner Inc.'s AOL and Yahoo Inc., said the most troublesome Web sites were hosted abroad, where the government's writ did not carry in any case.

And even if sites suspected of inciting terror were hosted in Britain, the ISPA said its members had neither the competence nor the desire to rule on whether a particular site was illegal.

Attempts to do so, the group said, amount to corporate censorship and could subject service providers to lawsuits and accusations of breaking free-speech laws.

Unlike the case with child pornography, which is often easily recognizable by sight, policing terror-related Web sites requires subjective judgments on whether a foreign-language text was inciting anything or anyone, the ISPA contends.

Experts agreed, saying terror-related material was much more difficult to identify unambiguously, and that it would be difficult to extend Britain's strict anti-child pornography regime — which includes censoring parts of the Web known as pedophile hot spots — to sites that were merely carrying opinions, no matter how offensive.

Increasingly, in any case, incitement and propaganda work was taking place on closed, password-protected forums. Given that context, Ian Brown, a research fellow at the Oxford Internet Institute, said the idea of "removing" anything from the Internet was not realistic.

"(Censorship) just drives it underground," he said. "It might remove some of it from the open, visible Internet but it will just move to servers that are closed."

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See also:

<http://cleaves.zapto.org/news/story-860.html>

http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5iUjUtJoE-EKmRVrc3la5fFUp_8SgD8U7RN0O1

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-884.html>