

# Internet Censored

by Adam Levenstein  
Collegian Staff

For the past ten years, the Internet has been the height of technical conversation in the United States. This huge, international network did not become popular among the ordinary, non-technical people until the creation of the World Wide Web (WWW). The Web, in reality, is nothing more than a collection of documents, allows people around the world to place information about themselves, their hobbies, or other interests on the Internet in full color.

## Adult magazines, such as Playboy and Penthouse, have set up their own Internet servers

Since 1991, the WWW has increased the popularity of the Internet, and this number is continually growing. With the increase, the amount of information available to people has skyrocketed - one can learn about anything from computer programming to sex.

Yes, with the amount of people on the net, pornography has found a new home. Adult magazines, such as Playboy and Penthouse, have set up their own Internet servers. Some amateur adult sites have received as much as 1000 visits per day.

WWW access is unlimited - that is, people that have access to the Web have access to the entire Web. This has raised serious, justified questions about children gaining access to pornographic sites.

In July of 1995, the Senate responded to this possibility by approving the Communications Decency Act, which would forbid the transmission of "indecent" material by electronic means - including the Internet, private electronic Bulletin Board Systems, and by disk. The passage of this bill raises serious questions about censorship and whether the government should be allowed to regulate the posting of so-called "obscene" documents to the Internet.

Whether you approve of pornography or not, the fact remains that people have the right, established by Freedom of Speech, to both buy and sell pornography. When one buys Internet access through a local or national provider, he or she is buying access to a nearly unlimited source of information, including pornography.

Of course, the obvious argument is "What about the children?" Children also have access to pornography; however, new, simple and inexpensive software allows parents to block certain areas (such as those containing pornographic words or phrases)

## Software allows parents to block certain pornographic areas

from a child's access. Therefore, parents can keep young children from accessing adult material. This puts the responsibility in the hands of the parents rather than those of the federal (or state) government.

The question is "does the government have the right to censor the Internet?" There is only one possible answer - no. The right to free speech is a basic, fundamental right. The Internet is merely a new medium, as were the radio and television at some point in history. I am not trying to justify pornography; however, freedom of speech is an important value which must be upheld.

The next question, of course, is one of demand. Many people want, and look for,

pornography. A certain site (whose name and location will remain unmentioned) received 90,000 visitors the first day it opened. In another instance, the German government ordered CompuServe, a popular Internet provider, to block all access to porn sites because these sites violate German pornography laws. CompuServe responded by censoring these sites for all of its users. The international protest by CompuServe users forced the corporation to find a way to block access only in Germany. This system is currently under construction, and CompuServe users can expect to have full access again in a few months.

## Adam-- "Allow the people to decide what offends them."

Earlier this year, Carnegie Mellon University announced that it has blocked access to certain sites which the university has deemed "obscene" - itself a vague term. This has promoted an uproar from the students, but CMU has stood firm in its attempts to "protect the morals" of the adult students. Other colleges and universities, including Penn State (which has blocked access to certain adult newsgroups) have followed suit. What gives the university that right?

Most censorship laws (both federal and state) involve outlawing materials which are "obscene" or "indecent." A basic problem with censorship is the definition of these words. If one interprets these words to mean "ideas or concepts that offend the public," then it is necessary to uphold the basic concept of liberty: *Allow the people to decide what offends them.* The idea is quite simple; if you don't like porn, don't get it. If you don't like asparagus, don't buy recipes for it. If the government outlaws Net porn, where does it stop? Illegalizing online asparagus recipes? Sooner or later the government will allow only certain "desirable" things to be displayed on the Internet.

The anarchy of the Internet is a wonderful thing. It has accelerated its growth and permitted a wide range of information to be available. It is obvious that people want pornography; otherwise, the number of visitors or porn sites would not be so high. Why should it be removed? If it violates your morals or the morals of your children, either do not look it up or place a site blocking device on your computer. Blocking software is very easy to find and use - you can even block asparagus sites.

A necessary, although possibly extreme, analogy is that to a series of incidents during the 1950s. Joseph McCarthy, a senator from Kansas, decided that a certain set of political beliefs - namely, that of Marxism - was unfit for the public, and decided that people who believe in such heresies were to be denied employment. Despite the harmless, pro-worker stance of most Marxist activists, communists (as well as "suspected" communists, which meant anyone who ever met a member of the Communist Party) were denied employment throughout the fifties.

We, as students, must understand that censorship is merely a removal of the freedom of expression; pornography is only available to those who want it, just as asparagus recipes are only available to the few people who like asparagus. I do not deny that pornography being available to young children is disturbing; however, there is no reason why adults looking for pornographic materials should be denied them.

# China's Lost Children

by Mary Began  
Collegian Staff

I never took my grandmother to extreme seriousness when she told me to eat all of my food, even the crusts to my sandwich, because there were starving children in China who would be grateful for that small amount of food. I never understood the intensity behind what she so often repeated to me. Due to the recent news articles that have shed light on the food and population situations in China, I now understand.

Under the regime of Mao, population exploded. He believed big populations made a nation strong. Yet, with a newly doubled population, more social and economic problems arose. Unemployment, overcrowding and famine were common occurrences in China. Even now, with new government reforms in population control, many of these problems still exist.

The law allowing couples to only have one child has not eased the country's turmoil, but in turn increased it. The preference among Chinese couples today is to give birth to a boy because a girl is most likely to marry out of the family and will not support her parents later on in life. An exception to the law is if a couple gives birth to a girl, they are allowed a second chance at trying for a boy. In this case, more than often these unwanted girls are placed in orphanages. These children are not orphans. They are abandoned, undesirable little girls or deformed little boys.

While China's "planned parenthood" control policy is at work, there is an even sadder side to the story involving the orphanages themselves. Scandal is rampant in Chinese orphanages. According to a 1992 adoption law, only childless couples over 35 years old whether they're foreigners or Chinese may adopt a healthy orphaned or abandoned baby. Couples wishing for a joy of their own are brought into these orphanages which, in some instances, seem perfectly normal. Yet these people are shown only one section of the facility; the section with the normal, healthy, adoptable babies. The unwanted, abused and deformed children are sent elsewhere and left to die.

This occurs only in the 'respectable' orphanages. In other orphanages it does not matter whether a child is healthy or is deformed. Most die anyway of some form of malnutrition, starvation, or abuse. These devastating reports are all true; they have all been stated in a just released Human Rights Watch/Asia report of medical records. In 1989, the ratio of deaths to new admissions for orphanages exceeded 50% per year for all of China. This may sound confusing, but a more bleak example can clear things up: one of China's orphanages, in the province of Shaanxi, accepted 232 children in 1989. Nineteen children left the orphanage, and a shocking 210 died.

While many other countries are reaching out to offer China advice, China feels that they can solve their so called 'problem' on their own. China's population rate is now in control but its government does not want the public to accept this notion for fear of another population surge. Many humanitarian groups are trying to help the children and help the families with new contraception methods yet they fear that if they keep attempting to aid China, China will shut off all foreign based adoption completely. As it stands now, I know that in my local church bulletin there are advertisements to adopt many of these Chinese 'orphans' - most of them girls.

Why are these children being treated this way? Is there any money funding the orphanages and if so, is there enough? And where is Hillary Clinton and her child care advocates? Does anyone care? I've read many articles on this subject but none has given me an answer to these important questions.

What China is doing to these poor children is tortuous. Why they are not helping them or caring for them is beyond me. A human life is not a thing to waste but a thing to cherish, whether it be a girl or a boy, crippled or healthy. Unfortunately, China and its population policies don't think so. In times like these I remember the words of my grandmother and I'm thankful for all that I have.

Dear Students,

As most of you probably know, Penn State will begin to collect a \$25/semester student activity fee next fall. The fee will generate several million dollars each year University-wide. All funding generated by Penn State-Behrend students will remain at Behrend. The money will be used for student activities and services that stimulate and support the cultural, intellectual, recreational, and social environment for students.

Two Behrend representatives, Lourdes Tirado from Behrend's Student Government Association, and Dean of Student Affairs Chris Reber, are members of the Student Activity Fee Implementation Committee, a University-wide committee of students, faculty, and staff that is presently meeting to determine the guiding principles for the use and distribution of the fee revenues at all University locations.

The Implementation Committee has a very important charge and is seeking student input regarding those activities and experiences that the fee should fund and those processes that should be used to distribute the funding.

How would you like your student activity fee money spent? How should the funding be allocated? Penn State-Behrend students are encouraged to make suggestions. Written comments can be sent to:

Student Activity Fee Implementation Committee  
c/o Kara Annechini, USG President  
203A Hetzel Union Building  
University Park, PA 16802

Students may also make suggestions at Behrend's SGA meeting on Wednesday, January 31, 1996. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. in Reed 114 and will be devoted largely to a discussion of the fee. Please feel free to attend.

Sincerely,

Tim Mallon, SGA President  
Lourdes Tirado, President, Multi-Cultural Council  
Chris Reber, Dean of Student Affairs