

Protecting Children with Technology or Protecting Children from Technology: Education or Restriction

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- Technology Vs Content Vs Social Perception
- Advance technology with outdated legislations
- The Hong Kong Experience: The Review of COIAO
- Conclusion

Technology Vs Content Vs Social Perception

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- Without repeating too much of the history on the battle between the above interested groups, the internet has been the spotlight and in the middle of the cross fire ever since its commercialization more than 15 years ago
- During the first round of public consultation, 18,800 submissions for comments were received by the HK Government
- Many public discussion forums were evolved to become fighting ground between the liberals and conservatives and even the religious groups
- It is a diverse situation for the general public on the control of accessible contents from the Internet

- Many legislations or regulations are more than a decade old which does not effectively cover digital media such as the internet and Web 2.0 applications
- User-defined contents from Web 2.0 and P2P software create another whole new way of content sharing, which makes blocking harder but sharing easier
- Online gaming has become a major concern of dissemination of violence and obscene contents, but yet no specific regulations or even government department to address this growing concern such as game rating
- Advance technology in image analysis and content security could help in digital forensics and investigations, but personal privacy issues have concerned many

- Some background:
 - COIAO (Control of Obscene and Indecent Article Ordinance) was first released in 1997 and certain minor amendments were made in the past 12 years or so
 - Articles are passed to OAT (Obscene Article Tribunal) for review and classification, and members of the OAT are members of the public appointed by the government
 - The ordinance is suggested to be overhauled in order to meet today's challenges from the internet and new media (full article could be downloaded from: http://www.coiao.gov.hk/en/consultation_doc.htm)

- Major suggested changes include:
 - Increase transparency and representation of the OAT
 - Consideration of implementation of server-side filtering by the ISPs
 - The submission of article for review before it is released
 - The addition of sub-class classifications
 - Increase in penalty
 - Publicity and public education

- A co-regulation approach between ISP industry, government and LEAs is the right approach
- Any regulation of such kind must be technology neutral and it should not single out the internet and other forms of new media to be regulated on its own
- Mandatory filtering at the ISP end (server-side filtering) is ineffective and will only be counter productive in protecting our children (Protecting our children FROM technology instead of protecting children with technology)
- Educate the “educators” is the key of success:
 - Educate the parents and teachers so they can teach the children and youngsters the proper value in evaluating information accessible from the Internet
 - Educate them with the use of proper technology to effectively limit the access of desirable content
- Government proposing such changes should be concern also with their international image to consumers and investors worldwide