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DISCURSIVE ESSAY

Twenty - first century is the age of information and new technologies. It is hard to imagine the every-day life without electronic devices, multimedia and computers. Especially the internet is becoming more and more important for nearly everybody as it is one of the newest and most forward-looking media and surely the medium of the future. The internet has changed our life enormously; there is no doubt about that. Using social nets, checking emails, following twits, laughing at new funny videos or “liking” photos – all these is a huge and indefeasible part of modern society life.

Information comes in a rash and powerful flow and as any power the internet contemporaneously can bring both use and harm. Main advantages of the internet become at the same time its huge disadvantages: easy access to any information and anonymity. It is easy to find online reference books and dictionaries, daily newspapers as well as porno and articles where you can read the instruction of “how to make a bomb from household items.” Should the censorship be present or everybody must get access to any piece of information they want – this question is one of the most up to date.

Censorship or not censorship – that is the question! First of all let us find out what is hidden under this term. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary censorship is: “Act of changing or suppressing speech or writing that is considered subversive of the common good. In the past, most governments believed it their duty to regulate the morals of their people; only with the rise in the status of the individual and individual rights did censorship come to seem objectionable. Censorship may be preemptive (preventing the publication or broadcast of undesirable information) or punitive (punishing those who publish or broadcast offending material)”.

The Columbia Encyclopedia says: “Official prohibition or restriction of any type of expression believed to threaten the political, social, or moral order. It may be imposed by governmental authority, local or national, by a religious body, or occasionally by a powerful private group”.

We can see that the main idea of censorship (judging from the definition) is restriction\prohibition of ideas that may be harmful – in other words, the basic idea is “to protect order or values.”

The main argument of the Campaign Against Censorship is: “We believe that the repressive dangers of censorship for adults outweigh any possible benefits, and that what is acceptable for adults to read, see, or hear should be decided by personal judgement and taste, not by the law”.

Proclaiming “freedom of speech” and “free choice” and “personal judgement and taste” the “defenders” mostly forget about the fact that

freedom also has its own measures and it stops when there arise a question about somebody's life and physical or moral health. The subject is very deep and we need to give classification of existing censorship forms to argument our point of view and to make it more clear.

Forms of censorship:

- Preventive (exercised before the expression becomes available to public)
 - Prior restraint by government
 - Licensing
 - Self-censorship
- Punitive (exercised after the expression is made public)
- Censorship vs. Taboos.

Speaking about censorship in internet for adults, it makes sense to consider this problem as the problem of Censorship vs. Taboos: "Censorship is a conscious policy; it may be enforced without the assent of the greater part of society. A taboo enters intimately into the scheme of feelings of those who entertain it. The taboo is particularly effective in self-control; when it is applied by group action to those who do not entertain it, such action is generally spontaneous and unreflective".

This aspect is wider and includes much more than porno films. Under the censorship should be taken information which might be an incitement for making crime and harm other people. Here we should include: videos and articles which promote (and sometimes even teach) killing, raping, and

child pornography etc.

Everything that is taking place in the internet nowadays is a clear bias in favor of impunity of those who abuse the freedom of speech and the ability to public any content and information on the internet. An access to the plenty of ugly, harmful and dangerous resources is generally unrestricted.

Censorship must be within the same framework as other electronic and printed media are. This is a ban on incitement to violence or slander - spreading of false information in order to cause harm to humans. Halla Gunnarsdottir, a political adviser to the minister of the interior in Iceland showed her attitude concerning the censorship under the discussion of providing law about internet censorship on the governmental level: "I think we should be able to discuss the internet with more depth, without just shouting censorship on the one hand and laissez-faire on the other hand"

The ideas and values do not disappear while "changing reality" and the laws which exist to protect our right in reality should also protect us in the web-reality: "There are laws in our society. Why should they not apply to the Internet?"

Because of the freedom of the context available on the web, one can now kill with prior planning, lead someone to commit suicide and cause fear in someone's life. It is easy to create own drugs and poison someone or make a bomb and blow up the office building or a boss's car. That is so easy to view private pictures, videos, letters and documents without the

owner's permission.

The first stage is watching somebody's raping and making phantasies; the next stage - watching more and more videos with desire not only to watch but also "to try"; the last stage – embody the fantasies into reality and committing a crime. The Internet has no face and no name – this could be a person in another part of the world as well as the charming next-door neighbor.

Censorship of certain internet content probably is not the panacea from the societal diseases, but "to prevent" is the first and the easiest step to protect a society from any possible crime and harm.