Social Control in Online Society
Advantages of Self-regulation on the Internet

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On behalf of the Author

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3 Levels of Online Regulation

1) Contract between producer and participant

2) Social conventions between players
   (Magic circle)

3) External regulation
Control is necessary

Online communities are just like real worlds: control is necessary to make for a pleasant society. This does not automatically imply control by government or by company.

In many virtual communities there has been a kind of social control for many years now that adequately maintains order in their public virtual space.
Are laws unnecessary?

Does this mean that laws are unnecessary?

Some people cry out for an Internet police that must maintain public order in the cyber-Gomorrah.

Others say: there can be order without law.

Not only is legislation unnecessary for law, but law is unnecessary for order.
Study of Prof. Robert Ellickson

Study of dispute resolution among farmers and ranchers in Shasta County, California (1991):

Most people find the maxim 'everyone is deemed to know the law' too hard, and as the costs of procedures are so high, they fall back on common-sense norms.

Result: all 3 functions of law - rule formation, enforcement, and dispute resolution - are asserted by means of informal norms.
Why should we make (new) rules, if there are (too many?) rules and codes already?
Do social conventions, control and arbitration not suffice?
Can be ruled and controlled by software code?

These and similar questions arise when we look at 'life' in the online communities.
Castronova: No 'Magic Circle'

A synthetic world “cannot be sealed completely; people are crossing it all the time in both directions, carrying their behavioural assumptions and attitudes with them.”

Elements of real life regularly creep into discussions in digital environments, whether they be social virtual worlds or online games, and discussions flow the other way, too.
Self-regulation of online communities alone is sometimes insufficient. Control by software code can be rigid.

The government will intervene in cases of serious abuse or criminal cases. Just like in real world...

The difference is the huge control by software.
A Comprehensive System of Social Control

If all parties involved in the chain jointly formulate regulations, a good balance between external and internal regulation can be found in which supervision, maintaining order, crime prevention and dispute resolution are openly organized.

USE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS
Table: 3 Elements of a comprehensive system of social control

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Excrescences of civilization

Spamming, hacking, child pornography, pedophilia, sexism, racism, and fascism:
It is very difficult to put a stop to this, apart from being real or virtual world.

The problem is that many hidden interests are at stake, such as money, power, and political connections.
Conclusion

Self-regulation of online communities alone is insufficient. In case of serious abuse and criminal cases the government will intervene.

Extreme behavior in online communities often provokes outsiders to call for government measures. However, self-regulation is the first and best choice.
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If you do not trust social control @ Internet:
Switch of your power!

Without electricity no online community

Thank You for your attention!
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