

Social Control in Online Society

Advantages of Self-regulation on the Internet



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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.

Prof. Lessig: Code is Law



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.

The difference with real world



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

Virtual Identity	Physical Society			Virtual Society		
Controller	Rules	Sanction	Combined System	Rules.	Sanction	Combined System
First-party control						
Actor	Personal ethics & values	Self-sanction	Self-control	Personal ethics & Netiquette	Self-sanction	Self-control + Software code (limiting by bot)
Second-party control						
Person Acted Upon	Contracts	Personal Self-help	Promisee-enforced contracts	User license; Reminders by 'pop ups' in software code	Correction and Ejection by administrators/moderators or/and software	Software code (limit of options etc., booting, IP-Blocking, or IP-Banning)
Third-party control						
Social Forces	Norms	Self-help by vicar et al	Informal control	Situational & peer groups norms	Shaming & Blaming; Expulsion	VID-ignoring, (by software code) & Stress by peer leader
Organisation	Organisational rules	Organisational enforcement	Organisational control	Organisational rules	Organisational enforcement	Organisational visible strain
Government	Law	State enforcement	Legal system	Some law & Jurisprudence	State enforcement	Legal system
International boards	Treaty	Cooperative enforcement	Legal system			

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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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