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ELECTRONIC PRIVACY INFORMATION CENTER

Filters & Freedom

FREE SPEECH PERSPECTIVES ON
INTERNET CONTENT CONTROLS

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The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) is a public interest research center in Washington, D.C. It was established in 1994 to focus public attention on emerging civil liberties issues and to protect privacy, the First Amendment, and constitutional values. EPIC is a project of the Fund for Constitutional Government. EPIC works in association with Privacy International, an international human rights group based in London, UK and is also a member of the Global Internet Liberty Campaign, the Internet Free Expression Alliance and the Internet Privacy Coalition.

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Filters & Freedom

FREE SPEECH PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNET CONTENT CONTROLS

Originally proposed as a technological solution that would forestall official censorship, content filtering has been shown to pose its own significant threats to free expression on the Internet. Often characterized by their proponents as mere features or tools, filtering and rating systems can also be viewed as fundamental architectural changes that may, in fact, facilitate the suppression of speech far more effectively than national laws alone ever could.

Several critiques and studies have been produced since filtering and rating systems were first proposed as voluntary alternatives to government regulation of Internet content. Partly as a result of the writings contained in this collection, the headlong rush toward the development and acceptance of filtering and rating systems has slowed. These critical views must be considered carefully if we are to preserve freedom of expression in the online world.

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The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) is a public interest research center in Washington, D.C. It was established in 1994 to focus public attention on emerging civil liberties issues and to protect privacy, the First Amendment, and constitutional values. EPIC maintains a comprehensive website on privacy and civil liberties issues at www.epic.org.

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Critical Infrastructure Protection and the Endangerment of Civil Liberties warns that efforts to protect the nation's critical infrastructures could result in sweeping new limitations on personal privacy and government accountability.