

# 'Netiquette': Surfing with consideration

by Patrick Lundstrom  
Staff Writer

The Internet is the longest lasting and widest spread anarchy in history.

It has unique qualities that have allowed this to happen and gives it such a wide appeal.

It is a neutral environment, where physical bias can be avoided and the free exchange of ideas can take place.

The uniqueness also provides a new environment for people to facelessly commit harm to one another. This inevitably leads to contemplation of censorship.

Many immediately balk at the mention of the "C" word. They start demanding their first amendment rights, freedom of speech, so on and so forth.

If only they would stop to think of the real meaning. The real question becomes: who will restrict information for the greater, or my own good?

First impulses say that it would be the government but they have little, or no power to take

punitive action against the "creepy crawlers" that log on from outside their jurisdiction.

The sheer size of the Net also makes monitoring difficult beyond reason.

Next in line, the service providers and commercial products could and do offer limitations or controls on certain situations.

Prime examples are several of the Usenet newsgroups (notably claris) and the secure data transfer programs.

These have the double-edge disadvantage of catering to a certain economic strata, and commercial influences in a formally educating environment.

Finally there is the individual

who must make the decision for themselves how to use the powers provided by the Internet.

It is each and every person

The decision must be made to self-censor, or to give that power to someone else.

If people continue to abuse the might of communication, then it will be left to commerce, and or government, to censor.

If people choose the path of sensible interaction, reaction, then they may retain their cherished freedoms.

The problem is that not everyone is sensible, or always has control of their emotional responses.

That is why anarchies have been so unsuccessful in the past.

That is also why we have developed the institutions of government and commercial capital-

ism.

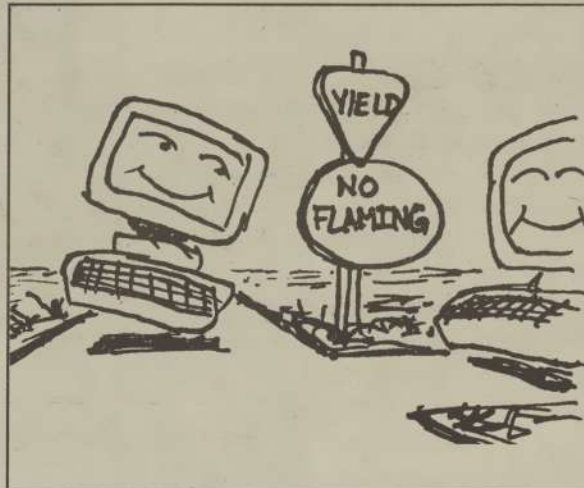
It must be remembered that an absolute of any of these (anarchy, social structure or monetary interaction) will form a system that is inherently unstable.

Only with an integration and balance between the three can there be a stable ground for humanity to grow and develop.

The Internet is like a huge, sprawling city. It has gridlock (locations so clogged with traffic that navigation into, and beyond, becomes difficult), crime (data destruction or theft, sexual offense, libel and slander, etc.) and litter (a lot of worthless stuff to wade through).

Like a major city, things are not all bad, there are wonders to behold. There is a diverse populace to interact with and learn from. New and unusual things can be found there, well before they would be found anywhere else.

There is a pace, a faster tempo, that lets humanity achieve new heights, much faster than otherwise possible.



Being considerate of your fellow travelers as you journey along will avoid gridlock on the information superhighway.

# Official language deemed necessary to unify

Better communications, cost savings cited as potential benefits of change

by Eric Eatherton  
Staff Writer

I thought about what all was going on, and I came to a conclusion: in order for us to truly progress as a state, and a nation, my personal belief is that English should be the official language of the United States—at least Oregon, anyway.

(Didja realize we're the only nation in the world without an official language, to the best of my knowledge?)

I came up with valid arguments to prove my point. First: the state will save taxpayers' money by not having to have official mail arrive in about eight languages. (While I'd taken my brother's mail, I once received some papers that arrived in languages I never knew existed, let alone saw. There were so many consonants blended together that in English weren't even in abbreviations together, I knew not what the folks who spoke that language used for vowels. I honestly thought it was gibberish.)

You see, there isn't much incentive for new immigrants to learn the English language, since official documents come in (most likely) their native tongue anyway. And thus, we have all these splinter groups with their own languages, their own customs, etc.

Second: ease of communication. Common sense tells us communication is easier between people if they speak a common language—and what better language than the one taught almost everywhere in the world? (True story—it is.)

Third: tradition. First, the colonists who settled in James-

town and Plymouth came from England, bringing the language with them.

Second, what language did immigrants learn when they came to Ellis Island, soon afterward to become American citizens-Españolo? Don't be ridiculous—they learned to speak English, and that being a stepping stone, they quickly assimilated into Ameri-

can society. And you know about when in Rome, right?

And fourth: historic precedent. The dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary (it existed 'til 1918) consisted of different ethnic groups each speaking a different language—also the case with the Ottoman Empire (gone since '22). Millions of people (both cases), ethnic groups and separate languages. Communication was reasonably difficult—and what it did for official documents, having to be printed and/or translated into different languages. (Translators don't come cheap, especially for official documents.)

In America, we're heading for a multilingual society, if we haven't reached that point already, a la these other examples, where we have many languages with few speakers.

The problem with it, is having to write the same thing over and over, but with different languages, and thus we break off into splinter groups.

Also, since the aforementioned kingdoms were united somewhat loosely, it wasn't very hard at all sometimes for these splinter groups to quarrel with each other,

or maybe outright war would break out.

We have the chance to learn from the same mistakes that a common language can foster unity between masses of people, especially in a so-called "melting pot," where the ties that bind us as Americans are few and far between, and people are quick to honor their differences, "honoring diversity," as they call it.

I once said to a past colleague, "In order to be truly united, we must not look at the differences, we must look at the common bonds." The last thing I want to happen to the United States is its disunification. Please note: I'm not implying we won't accept anyone who doesn't speak English, as it does take time to comprehend. I'm just saying we need a common official language to facilitate communications amongst our 260 million people.

Since English is spoken by a majority of Americans anyway, English should be the official language of at least Oregon, if not the United States. Also, I'm not implying that we won't allow people to learn foreign languages. If that's their desire, let

them do it.

That's fine to speak that language to others if you know the language well enough. But I'm saying English should be our official language, since an official language saves tax dollars and lots of grief. (And what about those of us, like myself, that don't know enough foreign languages to fill a perfume atomizer?) And if English does become our official language, since the majority of us speak it anyway, it won't be much a transition, if at all.

I'm just saying to those who want to become citizens, "If you want to come to our country, we'd like it if you learned to speak English, so that you may assimilate into our society."

To summarize: English should be our official language because it saves tax dollars by writing documents in one language instead of about six. It makes communicating with others easier. It was the first language of the general American society. And learning from the Ottomans and Austria-Hungary, having more than one language to write documents in isn't always a good thing.

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