

We should accept liability New Internet rules stand in the way of reason

accept liability

JASON GLEN COLUMNIST



You are five to 50 years of age. Your spouse is causing problems in your marriage. You smoke, eat, pop pills or see a counselor all the time because your life is too stressful. Your boss is unreasonable. You pay too much in taxes. Your kids are running away or doing drugs. Your local and national government representatives don't do their job. God is very unfair to you, and you can't understand why. What are you?

A Whiner, and unfortunately only one of many in this country. If this does not apply to you then don't take offense, but it does apply to too many people in our society. Within the last few decades our country has become a haven for crybabies. We are living in a society that is losing its responsibility and losing it quickly. It may sound funny, but nothing is anyone's fault anymore. It is either someone else's fault or some kind of natural phenomenon.

This lack-of-responsibility trend is destroying our nation. It slows down the learning process of children and limits what we as a society can attain. Many people blame their problems on others when it is usually their own fault.

This explains why there are so many lawyers in our country. It also explains why it is so hard for our government to get anything done. As soon as our government decides to stand its ground on something, we get rid of it and elect someone new who will be the next to be abused. People manipulate politicians and government officials more than politicians manipulate the people. We whine and groan about what is going on up on Capitol Hill and about what they have or haven't done for us; yet there are lots of us out there they can't read, write or point out all the states on a map. These people have no right to complain about our government when they don't even try to comprehend our political and economical system, let alone our written language.

Another example of this lack of responsibility is our judicial system and the jurors who make the decisions. People are literally getting away with murder because they were raised wrong or they had a bad day. Life isn't fair sometimes and we need to realize that blaming problems on others or variables only delays the recovery they could attain if they would only get off their rears and use some motivation, heart, responsibility and intelligence to better their lives. Temporarily having your feelings hurt or not being able to attain some position in life that you want is no excuse to start cursing out the president or Congress, or go out and harm someone mentally or physically.

Rich people say that poor people drag down our society. Poor people say that rich people are greedy and keep all the money in this country for themselves. Minorities complain that majorities hold them down. Majorities complain that minorities hold them back. Parents complain that their children don't obey. Teenagers complain that their parents are too strict.

The list goes on. If you actually look at it all together, it is a pretty sickening sight to behold. All of these corrupted thoughts could be remedied by personal responsibility.

Imagine a world where all people were responsible for their own actions. It would be an awesome place to live. It would not be a sinless place with a perfect government, but at least we would cut our bureaucracy to a minimum and we wouldn't have to endure any more of those horrid talk shows. So quit whining and suck it up.

Jason T. Glen is a sophomore political science major

Attention computer users. You can now rest at ease. Your government has taken steps to make sure that you don't have to go through the arduous task of thinking for yourselves.

The intellectual training wheels appear in the form of the Telecommunications Reform Act, which Congress recently passed by an overwhelming margin. Much of the act deals with the deregulation of the broadcast media, but another section of the act is slightly more interesting. That part has to do with the regulation of what is or is not "obscene" material.

Television stations have long been restricted by law concerning the material and language that they are able to broadcast into our homes. Now, television manufacturers are required to include a V-chip, enabling individuals to filter what subject matter is allowed to be displayed on the screen. The V-chip is a good idea. It allows an individual to control the ideas and images to which that person is exposed.

The legislation crosses the line, however, when it expands the umbrella of censorship to the Internet.

By treating the Internet in the same manner as the broadcast media, the act makes it illegal to say any of seven "bad" words online, to discuss abortion openly and to discuss certain parts and functions of the human body in any but the most clinical of terms.

I don't want to sound paranoid, but doesn't this whole scenario seem the slightest bit Orwellian to anyone?

And besides, isn't abortion legal? I looked it up; it is. Coincidentally, sex is also legal, and as I've been told from time to time, somewhat enjoyable. Now I defy anyone to tell me why people shouldn't be able



JEFF NOLEN COLUMNIST

to discuss perfectly legal activities over the Internet. Ironically, no one has ever attempted to prevent people from discussing illegal activities such as drug use and murder.

I have surfed the Internet often, and for various reasons. Never, in all my experience, have I come across an image or page that I had not personally chosen to expose myself to. The Net works on the same principle as our fine campus library: There is information available, but you have to know what you want to be able to find it. Even then, you might not be able to find it.

Simply put, no one is being shown material who has not explicitly attempted to find that material.

Despite the irrationality of the new law, it fails an even greater test. The act doesn't recognize the rights guaranteed to American citizens by a rather obscure legal document written by James Madison — the Bill of Rights. The willingness of Congress and the president to ignore these rights is a slap in the face to any intelligent American.

The greatest paradox of the Telecommunications Act is that it was borne of a legislature that claims to be fighting tooth and nail to keep

the government out of our lives. Granted, the act received wide, bipartisan support, but its passage shows the true colors of our fair Congress and its conservative leadership. The people who passed the act are not in favor of less government. They are in favor of a government that is allowed to control the information to which its citizens

can be exposed. For a group of people who find abortion so offensive, I find it interesting that they do not flinch at such a miscarriage of justice.

The Telecommunication Reform Act does not enable common people to think for themselves. Rather, it selectively deletes ideas and images from our collective consciousness to ensure that no one adopts values that are "wrong."

Now that is what I call obscene.

Jeff Nolen is a senior psychology major



Affiliations left behind at the polls

Eddie Murphy usually isn't regarded as a master political strategist. But he did express some words of wisdom in 1992 during the presidential race between



ROB CLARK COLUMNIST

George Bush and Bill Clinton. "Well, I'm gonna have somebody's foot up my ass," Murphy said, "so I might as well vote for whoever has the smallest foot."

This seems to be the problem for most of voting America. Once you get past the diehard Democrats and Republicans, the voting population seems to be stuck between the lesser of two evils, or whoever has the smallest foot.

This uncertainty is to be expected. Despite what candidates like to believe, it is difficult for regular citizens to identify with wealthy politicians.

This is what makes the diehards so unusual. Regardless of the issue, some automatically vote in the direction of their favored party. Any politician who tiptoes too close to the opposing border is sure to be shot down. When was the last time a major Republican

candidate came out as pro-choice? And for that matter, a Democrat who wanted to jack up military spending? These ideas are clearly marked in the George Bush and Bill Clinton. "Well, I'm gonna have somebody's foot up my ass," Murphy said, "so I might as well vote for whoever has the smallest foot."

"Well, I'm gonna have somebody's foot up my ass, so I might as well vote for the person with the smallest foot." — Eddie Murphy comedian

For example, I grew up as an Army brat (the child of a military parent). I was bombarded with conservatism for 18 years, so I pretty much thought of myself as a Republican. Although I didn't pay much attention to politics, I knew who I was supposed to support. Ronald Reagan was a king; Walter Mondale was a moron. George Bush was a

leader; Michael Dukakis was a loser.

The Democrats were a mystery to me, until I finally figured out the main differences between the two parties. That, plus the freedom of college, forced me to examine my naive political beliefs.

I had escaped the rigid environment that screamed "conservative!" — military men and women everywhere, barking out orders to their troops. But stereotyping runs rampant everywhere. When people hear I come from a military family, I'm immediately thrown into the Republican circle. When people hear I am pro-choice, I am stuck with the Democrat label.

Which political party people choose to affiliate themselves with should not be determined by a particular belief in one issue. Adopting the creed of a political party over individualism begets assimilation.

With the Republicans battling it out for positioning in the presidential race, voters who make their decisions based on character, not party, have little to hope for. There are the extreme racist views of Pat Buchanan, and the severely out-of-date beliefs of Sen. Bob Dole.

To borrow from Murphy, they've both got big-ass feet.

Rob Clark is a senior journalism major



MAIL CALL

Student Advisory Board wants input

The PTTS Student Advisory Board would like the student body to know that there is a way to voice your concerns and ideas to PTTS. This committee was created last semester to solicit input and advise PTTS on meeting the needs of the student body. If you have input concerning parking our shuttle bus issues, please feel free to e-mail us at:

kam1624.acs.tamu.edu. PTTS Student Advisory Board is a University committee, and anyone wishing to serve on the committee can pick up an application in the Student Government Office in Koldus, the Student Programs Office in the MSC, or Multicultural Services in the MSC. Applications are due April 10.

To specifically address the Rec Sports parking issue, PTTS is handling the situation as requested of it by the Rec Center.

Finally, we want to point out that PTTS is making an effort to serve the student body better. Their participation in this committee is one example. PTTS has also made an effort to inform students in advance of changes in parking conditions by placing ads in the Battalion. Last semester, Bus Operations provided shuttle service for the t.u. game as a response to student input. The service ran smoothly and provided effective. PTTS hopes to provide the service for all home games next year.

We hope this letter has demonstrated the proactive effort PTTS has made this year.

Kim Matthews Class of '95 Accompanied by 3 signatures

Aggie conservatives on the right track

As always, Chris Stidvent's argument is cute and consistent. Or better, thoughtfully worded like a smart criminal careful not to leave tracks. Don't get me wrong, I hear what you're saying, Chris, but your validity is shaky in my eyes.

Saying that "true conservatives" simply want to "be left alone to make more money" and refuse to acknowledge "poor people and social responsibility" is as foolish a generalization as saying that liberals are all too weak and ignorant

to stand up for what is right and instead take the lesser route by supporting everything. I analyze this to any dishonest campaign, political or personal, where becoming a chameleon is the safest bet for success.

The "social conscience" of conservatives is just as wrong for supporting old values and tradition as the liberals' thoughtless view that these things are a waste of time. Officially voiced "good reasons" to support a good thing (that has been more than consistently supported for years) is not necessary to prove it true. Unless, of course, the one questioning is unable to accept the ideas of someone else he accepts as his own. Do I smell a contradiction? But if you need a pacifier that badly, here are some "good reasons" to support tradition: The knowledge the past gives us about the present and future, the growth and equality generated by celebrating them, and the years of statistics and incomparable support of Texas A&M to prove it.

Perhaps the more one lacks of their own integrity and direction, the more he will shift the blame and question to those who do have these qualities—the "right" ones, if you will. Including racism: Yes it exists and is wrong, but it is equally wrong to say racism is more prevalent among conservative Aggies than anywhere else. Just like other problems, it is recognized and should be dealt with, but I argue that Aggies are smart for focusing on the positive issues—after all, the positives are the bigger issues around here anyway.

What good does it ever do to stare back at your mistakes? Aggie conservatives aren't about avoiding and rationalizing — WE THINK!

Marissa Anne Agosta Class of '97

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111

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