Platform for Internet Content Selection

<http://www.w3.org/PICS>

What PICS is not...

- RSAC
- SafeSurf
- Dublin Core

- These are all specific metadata schema
- PICS is the interoperable infrastructure that lets users make choices based on these

What is PICS?

- PICS is an infrastructure for associating metadata with Internet content.
  - Originally designed to help parents and teachers control what children access on the Internet
  - Its use has now extended to other communities including information discovery, code signing, privacy, and intellectual property rights management

What does PICS give us?

- A simple architecture for describing and transporting metadata
- Support for various metadata schemas (resource description models) with distributed schema registration
- Support for 3rd party metadata creation and distribution

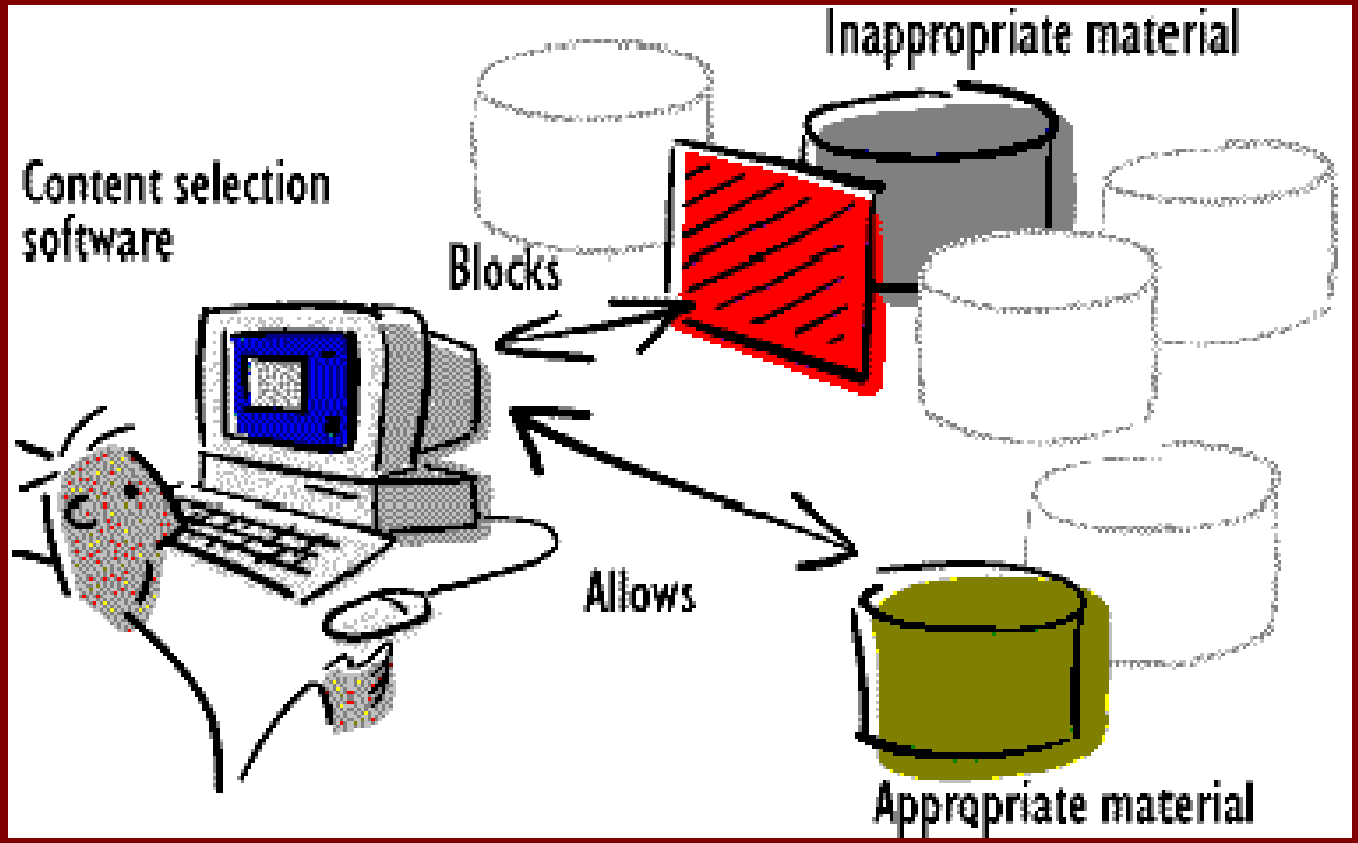
What does PICS give us?

- Allows us to control reception rather than distribution
  - preserves free speech and choice
- Flexible, efficient architecture.
- Interoperability - common framework

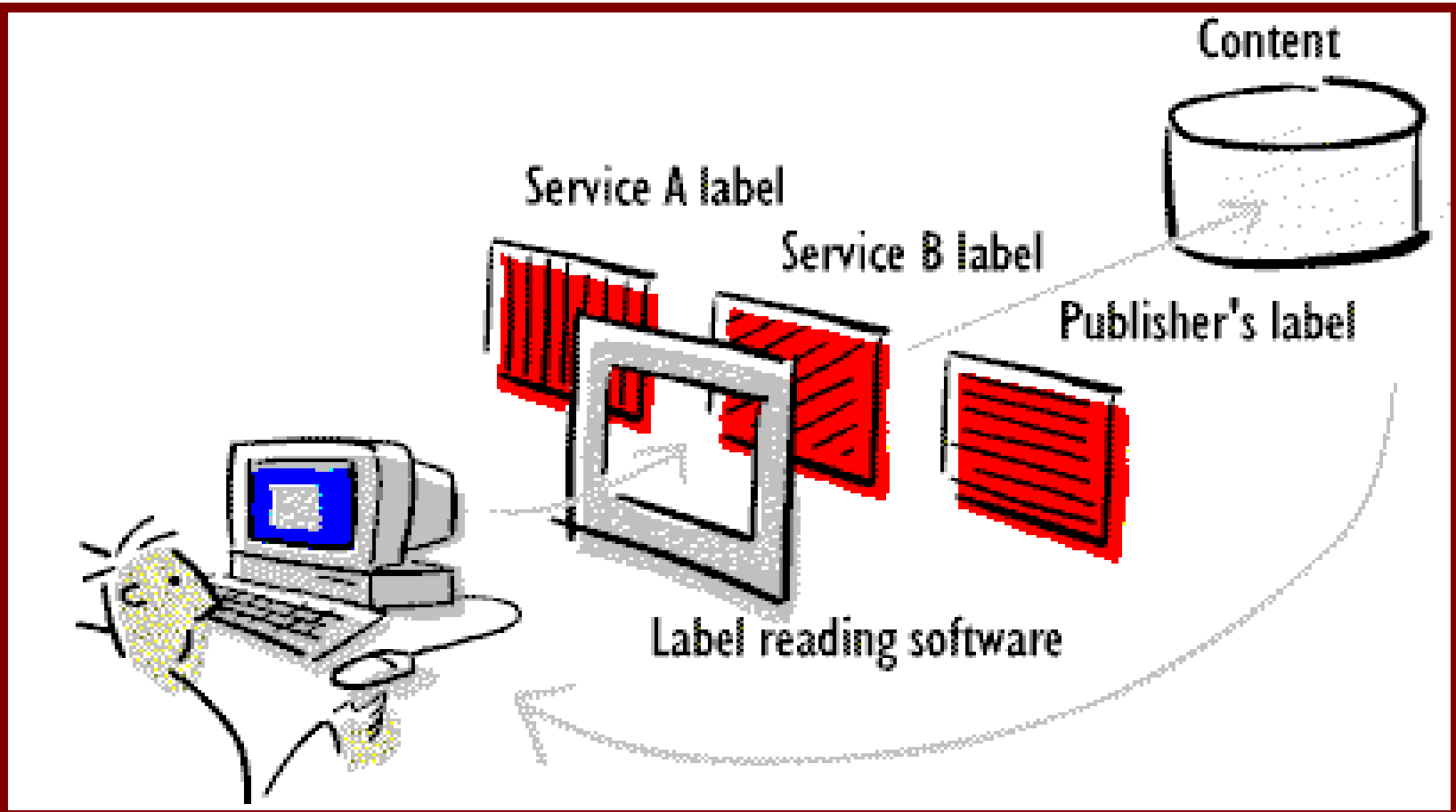
How is PICS used?

- To make:
  - Assertions
  - Catalogs
  - Labels
  - Ratings
  - ...
- Combinations of metadata are powerful!

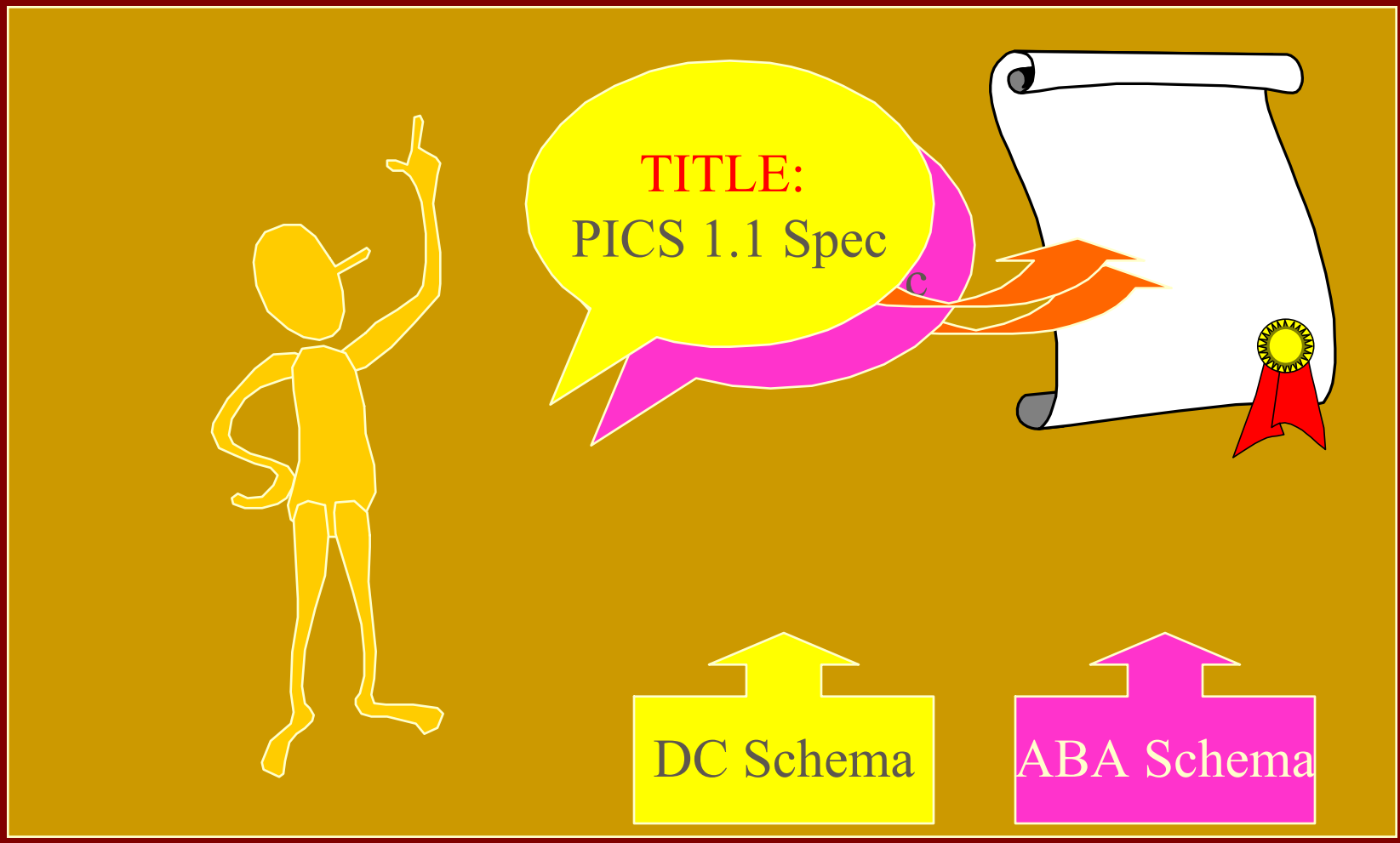
How does PICS work?



Choice & Trust!



PICS Architecture



PICS Architecture

- PICS Labels can be transmitted in three ways
  - Embedded META
  - Transmit with object
  - Trusted 3rd party
- PICS schema are distributed and richly cached

Applications of PICS

- Initial implementations of PICS allowed users to filter content based on labels at their browser
- The current generation of products is moving the functionality to the infrastructure: search engines, proxies and firewalls

Using PICS

- We can use PICS for:
  - selection
  - organization
  - acquisition
  - choice
- Two broad categories of use:
  - keeping materials out
  - discovering information

Discovery: Getting the information your looking for

- PICS can allow us to both filtering out and filtering in
- Filtering can occur at reception, in the infrastructure or at transmission
- Filtering a search to refine the results
- Dunn & Bradstreet offer ratings as a service for filtering and selection http://www.companiesonline.com

PICS dependencies and ascendencies

- PICS is a building block
  - The initial use was content selection for child protection, but what's next?
  - Selection: Rich information discovery
    - D&B, Firewall vendors, major server vendors
- PICS in combination with other technologies provides the basis for rich information retrieval on the Web

PICS dependencies and ascendencies (cont.)

- Building on PICS at W3C
  - Digital Signature Initiative
  - Privacy
  - Intellectual Property Rights
- What pieces are still evolving?
  - Interoperable trust management
  - Policy language for transporting profiles
  - Support for PICS in the tools

PICS Futures

- Transportable Policies
  - At the browser
    Content Advisor in IE 3.0
  - At the firewall/proxy
  - Policies as a service
- Search Engine Support
- Digital Signatures and Trust

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Scientific American March 1997