SIECUS

REPORT

R E P O R T

Debra W. Haffner, M.P.H.
President

Carolyn Patierno
Director, Program Services

Mac Edwards
Editor

Opinions expressed in the articles appearing in the *SIECUS Report* may not reflect the official position of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. Articles that express differing points of view are published as a contribution to responsible and meaningful dialogue regarding issues of significance in the field of sexuality.

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THE NET AND THE WEB:
UNLIMITED POTENTIAL TO COMMUNICATE
SEXUALITY ISSUES

Mac Edwards

wo women at Columbia University—Billie Lindsey and Judith Steinhart—have forever changed the way that I look at the Internet and the World Wide Web.

Just a few months ago I was one of those people who rarely (and, even then, reluctantly) used my computer to find information or to talk with people. I used it essentially as a word processor. Even though I knew that the words "http://www" would lead me to important information sources, I was satisfied with traditional methods: newspapers, magazines, television, and the nearby library.

But Billie and Judith changed all that.

I first met them when they called to suggest an article on the popular "Go Ask Alice!" Web interactive health advice column which they developed and currently produce for the students at Columbia University here in New York City. They thought their story about the success of the column would interest the readers of the SIECUS Report and would fit this issue's theme, "Technology in Sexuality Education."

They sold me—and changed my mind about technology—when they said that their column, which was accessed ("hit" is the term used by Web site users) only 86 times when it started in May 1993, now regularly reaches a million people a month in 50 countries. A million people! And at minimal cost to Columbia's Healthwise University Health Service.

I won't spoil their story (on page 12), but I will say that the enthusiasm and excitement with which these two women produce the "Go Ask Alice!" column is contagious. And I think that you will be hooked, too, when you realize the full potential of the Net and the Web. The thought that all of us who believe in the importance of sexuality education can reach so many people at minimal cost is truly exhilarating.

That message is repeated in this issue of the SIECUS Report. You will learn from Sandra Bargainnier at the State University of New York at Oswego about the equipment you need for the Net...you'll hear from Dorel Shannon and Chris Dwyer who brought the Net to Planned Parenthood

Southeastern Pennsylvania...you'll hear how Rea Carey uses computer technology to communicate daily with her National Youth Advocacy Coalition members nationwide...and you'll hear from Ralph Tartaglione, a father of two who sees the value of the Net for his children yet effectively controls their access to certain sites.

PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME

As with everything, there are problems to overcome in computer technology.

A recurring problem is access. Many people and organizations are left out of the loop because they don't have the money or the skills. In our haste to learn about the Net and the Web, we may unintentionally forget about these people who are not as lucky as we are to have the resources and the training to benefit from this technology. We must offer a hand (whether in the form of time or money) to those around us who need help to understand and use the Net and Web.

Another problem is censorship. Daniel Daley, SIECUS director of public policy, gives SIECUS Report readers an excellent overview of actions in the past year designed to censor information on the Net. He warns that there are individuals and organizations determined to limit such communication. No doubt, we will see much legislative and legal action in the coming year.

MILLIONS WAITING
TO HEAR FROM US

This issue of the SIECUS Report is rounded out with reviews of eight new CD-ROMS and a directory of Web sites on sexuality-related issues.

As individuals who understand the importance of comprehensive sexuality education, we have a unique opportunity to reach so many people through the Net and the Web. There are literally millions waiting to hear from us. Now is the time to get started.

SEXUALITY EDUCATION AND THE INTERNET: THE NEXT FRONTIER

Dorel Shannon
Director of Education and Training
Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania*
Philadelphia, PA

and

Chris Dwyer
President
Cezanne Communications Corporation
Philadelphia, PA

*I*n 1994, for the first time ever, personal computers outsold televisions in the United States.

In 1995, emboldened by a new Congressional majority with a conservative agenda, proponents of abstinence-only programs throughout the United States intensified efforts to abolish comprehensive sexuality education programs.

These two facts highlight an unparalleled new opportunity for advocates of comprehensive sexuality education: the delivery of complete, accurate, and accessible information directly to the computer screens of millions of teenagers, parents, professionals, and other adults via the Internet.

New opportunities, and change in general, are often heralded with mixed reaction. This is true for sexual health educators when it comes to the Internet. While some of us are inspired by its possibilities, others are overwhelmed by the technology and confused by the ABCs of the terminology ("USENET," "FTP," and "URL"). Many object to the hold of computer-based media on the time and energy of young people. And most of us have questions, sometimes troubling ones, about the use of the Internet as a vehicle for sexuality education. (For example: "What are young people exposed to vis-à-vis sexual images and messages?" "How can parents and educators exert some influence on young people's immersion in this 'medium'?" "How should educators respond to campaigns to censor sexuality-related content?")

These questions and concerns are important and deserve attention. We should not, however, allow them to prevent us from reaching our constituents in new and daring ways.

While debating the merits of the Internet (and of computer-based education, entertainment, and communication,

in general), we must also ask ourselves how to employ this resource to its fullest, with the ultimate goal of promoting sexual health.

THE INTERNET IS A "DATA HIGHWAY"

This article will begin by explaining what the Internet (a.k.a. "the Net," the global or national "information infrastructure," "cyberspace," or, to use a much maligned term, the "information superhighway") really means.

In reality, the Internet (hereafter called *the Net*), which no one owns, is not a real network. It is an abstraction: a "virtual network" of tens of thousands of interconnected computers that speak a common language which allows them to exchange information quickly and efficiently. As such, it is the working prototype of the global information infrastructure or data highway.

The Net began in the late 1960s as a way to connect U.S. Department of Defense facilities, university research laboratories, and defense contractors in a manner that could withstand nuclear attack. New telecommunications protocols ensured that if a failure occurred in one part of the system, traffic would temporarily route around the damaged segment to its destination. Three decades later, this fundamental principle of how the Net works continues to frustrate its potential censors.

The "World Wide Web," (hereafter called *the Web*) accounting for the fastest-growing portion of the Net's traffic, is not a real network either. It is one abstraction on top of another: an agreement in principle by users of the global Net to share text, graphics, sound, and video using certain standard formats.

The Web generates excitement among educators because it provides a simple, flexible way to offer instant access to curriculum materials of various media types—including text, graphics, sound, and video—at the student's own discretion and pace.

In the most practical and urgent terms for sexuality educators, a student needing information about the trans-

mission and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can download a fact sheet from Planned Parenthood rather than be forced to accept a school district's abstinence-only prescription as the last word.

PROMOTING SEXUAL HEALTH ON THE NET: TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE

One way to explore the possibilities for promoting sexual health through the Net is to ask ourselves: What do we as sexuality educators do each day that we can modify or reinvent to promote sexual health via the Net? Or, perhaps even more compelling, what do we as sexuality educators do now to promote sexual health that we could do better, or even more effectively, on the Net?

Some existing Net sexuality education resources are just scratching the surface in terms of what they can communicate to different audiences:

- *Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania* (http://www.libertynet.org/~ppsepa) offers its publications and audiovisual catalogs, professional training programs, and an extensive list of pointers to other sexual health resources on the Net, as well as the only sexuality education library currently online. From its debut in June 1995 through February 1996, this site received more than 100,000 inquiries, as well as e-mail messages, links, and orders to purchase publications from around the world.

- *SIECUS* (http://www.siecus.org) provides information about its services, programs, and publications. It also contains news about sexuality education from numerous other sources as well as updates on international activities for users worldwide. Of particular interest, the site contains complete annotated bibliographies on such subjects as child sexual abuse education, prevention and treatment; current religious persectives on sexuality; gay and lesbian sexuality; HIV/AIDS; sexuality and disability; sexuality in middle and later life; sexuality issues in popular culture and the media; and sexuality resources from around the world.

- *Planned Parenthood Federation of America* (http://www.ppfa.org/ppfa), which went live on the Web in January 1996, offers practically its entire Communications Department library of fact sheets, including graphics; it also provides general information about the contents of the national office library and procedures for phoning in an order for a computer search of the library database.

- *The Safer Sex Page* (http://www.safersex.org) provides detailed information on "safer sex" practices, including risk factors from various types of sexual activity, barrier methods to prevent STDs, information about contraception, and a separate site that uses "WebChat" technology to allow an interactive discussion among visitors to the page.

The possibilities for going beyond these resources are numerous, limited only by our imaginations:

- **Sexuality educators often attempt to reach parents through workshops, many on the subject of communicating with children about sexuality. This is a frustrating enterprise because parents are often too busy even to go out for an evening.**

    To overcome this obstacle, sexuality educators could put their "parent education kits" on their organizations' homepages with tips for communication, information on "normal stages of sexual development," common questions asked by children, and suggested responses, bibliographies, and clips from videos.

- **Professional development often takes place at conferences and workshops. The fees for such programs often deter financially strapped systems.**

    Organizations could meet some of the professional development needs of teachers, health educators, medical professionals, and others who work with at-risk clients by posting tips for program implementation; providing up-to-date information about topics such as contraception, sexual assault, and HIV/AIDS; and developing networking opportunities through chat rooms, forums, or newsgroups.

- **Organizations promoting sexual health have traditionally had to rely on the interests of journalists, reporters, and producers to give voice to their perspectives. Too often the content and point of view is defined by the sponsor rather than by the sexual health professional.**

    Via the Net, sexuality educators could conduct static or interactive interviews to educate the public about sexual health without second-party filtering.

- **Discussions about sexuality education (what it is, how it is implemented, what is defined as high quality) currently occur in professional workshops, journals, and conferences, limiting the discourse to a very small community of believers (and the staunchly opposed).**

    Definitions of "comprehensive" sexuality education, crafted for the layperson and broadcast on the Net, could enhance community understanding of the philosophical foundation of a sexuality educator's work. This would provide practitioners with an opportunity to communicate directly with the public about this increasingly politicized subject, thereby influencing public policy.

THE NET IS REDEFINING COMMUNITY

Central to the Net's impact on the work of sexual health educators is how it is redefining what we mean by "community." Educators, activists, and citizens are interacting daily, even

hourly, with their counterparts in scores of other nations on the Net. This new community means that national organizations with regional, state, and local affiliates will need to come to clearer consensus on both philosophical and practical issues.

A Planned Parenthood affiliate, for example, may emphasize or de-emphasize certain aspects of sexuality education based on perceived "community standards," only to find that members of "their" community are turning on their computers and tuning in to the national office, to another Planned Parenthood affiliate, or to another organization to learn more.

At the same time, local and regional social service agencies will, through the Net, attract constituents from their own community who never would have discovered or interacted with them otherwise. (For example, Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania mailed 15 copies of its *Audio-Visual Resource Catalog* in February 1996. That same month, 150 people viewed the catalog on the Net. These individuals, by virtue of "surfing" the Net, became potential consumers of Planned Parenthood's sexual health education message.)

The definition of community is also impacted by questions of access. At Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania, 68 percent of the clientele are at or below the federally defined poverty level. Will we reach those who have the greatest need for sexual health information via the data highway? Are those who are most "at risk" in their communities also those who surf the Net?

While it is true that, today, those with the greatest need for information are disproportionately excluded from what the Net has to offer, this will change rapidly over the next few years. As phones incorporate e-mail capabilities, and televisions deliver content from Web sites at a thousand times the speed of current modems, the hardware aspect of today's "access debate" will disappear. Even now, the price of monthly Net access has dropped to half the cost of monthly cable television.

Whether through donated equipment to schools and libraries today, or through information appliances in many homes tomorrow, the Net will become accessible to the general population in ways only now imagined. The Net provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to make life-enhancing information available to as many people as humanly (or technically) possible.

ETHICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONCERNS

Strategizing specific ways to apply sexuality education models to the Net is only one challenge, and perhaps one of the simpler challenges. There are also many ethical and philosophical concerns that sexuality educators need to address. For example:

- What role should educators play in the growing movement toward censorship of "sexually explicit" or "pornographic" information on the Net?

- How can educators support parents concerned about their children's access to sexually explicit materials on the Net, while also providing them with the tools to help their children navigate this new resource? How is this different from, or similar to, work in promoting critical thinking skills for media?

- How do we address concerns about confidentiality and privacy for people asking questions via e-mail, particularly the real risk that a message may be read by an unintended recipient, and the perception by some computer users that their activities are being logged in even more detail than they actually are?

- Since sexuality education can involve providing general medical information, how can we as sexuality educators ensure that computer-based information is communicated and understood completely, while at the same time being careful not to "give medical advice"?

- How can we develop ways to interact with Net users that are as meaningful in their own way as face-to-face contact? Particularly given that people may ask questions through e-mail to maintain anonymity, can we develop "self-serve" resources that will have a similar impact and utility?

Implicit in these ethical questions is that they are being answered every day, in sometimes pernicious ways. In early February, Congress passed and the President signed a new communications law. It has three provisions that have a specific impact on the work of sexuality educators:

- a general prohibition on transmitting "indecent" material to minors over the Net, as part of an amendment to the law entitled the "Communications Decency Act" (CDA);

- a proscription on sending to minors descriptions or depictions of sexual or excretory organs or activities that are "patently offensive by contemporary community standards" across online networks, also as part of the CDA;

- an expansion (to encompass the Net and other interactive computer media) of a provision of the notorious 1873 "Comstock Act" (used to prosecute Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger), which forbade communicating through printed media, phone, or mail information about performing or obtaining an abortion.

All three provisions are currently the subject of litigation in federal court and are, therefore, not enforceable as law. The "indecency" and "patently offensive" speech provisions were declared unconstitutional and enjoined by special three-judge courts in Philadelphia and New York. The Justice Department has appealed these decisions to the Supreme Court.

Despite these victories, many states have passed or will pass laws resembling these provisions inevitably chilling speech as online content developers and service providers choose self-censorship.

The courts have not yet addressed the abortion speech provision. The Justice Department says this provision is unconstitutional and will not enforce it. It could, however, change its mind at any time.

The CDA, the result of political dealing, had a perhaps unanticipated impact on the Net both before and after passage. Homepages went dark in protest; advocacy groups held online petition drives; and numerous Net users defied the law by broadcasting not only comedian George Carlin's "seven dirty words," but the address and phone number of local Planned Parenthood affiliates and the 800/230-PLAN telephone number for Planned Parenthood clinics nationwide.

In another important development for sexuality educators, the major online services are now incorporating filtering software at the urging of frightened parents (as well as those with political agendas). Such filters prevent the viewing of an encrypted list of "bad" sites. Although the manufacturers of the software claim good intentions, one need only look at the past impact of such efforts to see firsthand censorship's unintended results.

In one well-publicized case, America Online's ban of the word *breast* shut down breast cancer survivor groups. Then CompuServe Information Service closed off *worldwide* access to gay and lesbian groups as part of a ban on sexually explicit groups after a mere inquiry from a local prosecutor in Bavaria, Germany—cutting off those who are most in need of connection.

To evaluate the implications of "parental controls" or software filters, Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania ran its homepage through a Web site called the "Black Thursday Machine" designed to simulate popular filtering technologies. The site was rendered nonsensical: Not only did the filters censor every occurrence of the word *sex*, but every occurrence of the word *teen* as well. And, heartening or disquieting (depending on your point of view), there is a special button inside such filtering software that lets the user e-mail the vendor with suggestions for additional banned sites.

THE NET HELPS US REACH GOALS
Clearly, we cannot abandon traditional channels in favor of digital technology. Computer-based tools will never take the place of a sensitive, highly skilled, and caring sexual health educator.

The Net does, however, provide us with a powerful and challenging tool which, when channeled appropriately, can help us reach our goals in ways we never dreamed possible. We need to see the capacity for both good and harm and to recognize the opportunity to define the possibilities and parameters. We must also remember that this opportunity creates a void: if we don't fill it, someone else will. And that someone might not share the philosophy of comprehensive sexuality education.

The Net is a reality of life today. We can try to ignore it, or we can begin to think creatively about its limitations and possibilities. We can challenge ourselves, and those we aim to educate, to use this resource as a way to think critically about some of the most significant issues of our time.

We need only to open our minds—to bring to bear our collective skills, knowledge, and creativity—and through the Net we can help our communities lead healthier and more productive lives.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

GETTING STARTED ON THE NET

Sandra Bargainnier, Ed.D., C.H.E.S.
Health Science and Physical Education
The State University of New York (SUNY) at Oswego
Oswego, NY

Even though sexuality information abounds on the Net, many sexuality educators are just learning where and how to get started.

With four basic items—a computer, a modem, a phone, and an Internet Service Provider (ISP)—they will find it easy to talk with other individuals and groups and find facts and figures related to their work.

HOOKING UP

As soon as sexuality educators have connected their computer to their phone line with a modem (with at least 14,400 to 28,800 baud or bits per second), they need to select a service provider to hook into the Net.

Most Net users join a national service provider such as CompuServe, Prodigy, or America Online (AOL). Fees and services vary from one company to another. Some charge $1.80 to $3.50 for each hour beyond allotted free time. Many national and local service providers are now offering access for a flat $10 to $25 monthly rate.

In some parts of the country, local cable services are experimenting with Net connection. This does not tie up the user's phone line and provides much quicker access. Unfortunately, such services are not available in most areas.

COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS

Sexuality educators will have access to three key Net communications functions—*e-mail, newsgroups,* and *listservs.*

E-mail is similar to talking on the phone except that users type dialog on their computer keyboard. It allows people to talk one-on-one with someone next door or across the globe. It also allows them to send the same message to several individuals at the same time. Messages are saved in a "mailbox" for retrieval at the individual's convenience. E-mail is free when Net access is free. It is an excellent way to collaborate in writing with colleagues about articles and ideas.

Newsgroups are similar to e-mail but not as private. Users must access a special program called a *news reader* to retrieve discussions or messages from a newsgroup. Called *chat groups* by some national commercial service providers, newsgroups are informal groups of electronic mail with predetermined headers such as "sci.med.aids". Users can voice their opinions, share ideas, and discuss a variety of topics.

Listservs are similar to newsgroups in that the group discusses a certain topic. They differ from newsgroups in that a user must register (usually at no cost). Messages are sent to a central list (perhaps at a university) and then a special computer process distributes the message to all subscribers via e-mail.

One listserv at New York University is titled MAPSSE (Multi-disciplinary, Academic, Professional Sexuality Students' Exploration). It is devoted to academic discussions of sexuality research and theory. Its goal is to support research, inquiry, program exploration, and peer evaluation. Many listservs limit entry and may ask for professional affiliations and credentials to guarantee interest. A listserv is ideal for testing ideas, exploring philosophies, and finding resource information.

INFORMATION FUNCTIONS

Two items that will provide users with professional information on sexuality issues are *Web sites* and *Gopher sites.*

Web sites provide pictures, sound, video, and text. Based on a computer programming language called *hypertext markup language* (html), links will connect one Web site to another with a click of the mouse. These sites provide valuable information to the general online public and sexuality education professionals alike.

Gopher sites are menu-driven sources of information. Unless users know the specific name of the Gopher site they want, they could have a "wild gopher chase." Web sites are now replacing or supplementing Gopher sites.

SEARCH FUNCTIONS

To travel the Web looking for sexuality-related information, users should have a Web browser (software such as Netscape, Microsoft Explorer, or Mosaic) to go from one site to another.

They should also have access to a search engine (Web software such as AltaVista or Yahoo) to help search for information by using key words, and putting those words inside quote marks for more software targeted access.

Users who know the address of a Web site (the URL or *Uniform Resource Locator*) can type the name in the search window of the Web browser. For example, a user will connect to "The Safer Sex Page" by typing and clicking **http://www.safesex.org.**

THAT'S IT

That's it! With this information, a sexuality educator can use the Net to communicate and to find information on sexuality issues.

BETWIXT AND BETWEEN: AN ORGANIZATION'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

Rea Carey
Executive Director
National Youth Advocacy Coalition
Washington, DC

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), sponsored by the Hetrick-Martin Institute and based in Washington, DC, addresses public policy issues related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) youth through the collaboration of a broad spectrum of national and community-based organizations. It also provides information, resources, and assistance to GLBT youth and their adult allies nationwide

The over 100 gay-specific and non-gay, mainstream NYAC participating organizations from across the country work to end discrimination against GLBT youth and to ensure their physical and emotional well-being.

NYAC's voyage onto, and relationship with, the Net mirrors that of other small-to-medium-sized organizations. In the realm of Net involvement, NYAC finds itself betwixt and between: We have an e-mail address but no Web page; the speed and low cost of online communication is efficient, but only one-third of NYAC's participating organizations are online (and only a handful have Web pages); access to the Net is time-saving in some ways and creates more work for staff in others; and online communication brings NYAC closer to some youth advocates and may create a distancing effect from others.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
As an internal communication tool the coalition has used e-mail to send out and receive information with small committees and with the coalition as a whole. NYAC staff check e-mail once or twice a day and send or forward public policy and advocacy information to coalition members on a daily basis.

Internal/Individuals. NYAC staff have found e-mail a productive way to work on ongoing projects with the coalition's leadership and representatives from participating organizations. For example, as we develop NYAC grants, the entire text is easily sent to people for comments. Changes are incorporated without ever touching a piece of paper.

Internal/Committees. NYAC is able to send information to its Public Policy, Regional Development, and Youth Leadership Working Groups with a few mouse strokes. However, not all committee members have e-mail and staff

often has to send a broadcast fax (and sometimes a letter!) to committee members to make sure the word gets out.

Every few months, someone will suggest that NYAC supplant costly conference calls with low-cost online "chat room" conferences. Although this option would save money, not everyone has access to a computer with a modem and an e-mail address. In addition, it is awkward to carry on a substantive online conversation among 12 people. The conversation turns into a list of "sound byte" statements popping up on a quiet screen and personalities all but disappear. The conversational elements that are so critical to understanding one another are completely lost—intonation, emotion, and intent.

Internal/Full Coalition. NYAC uses e-mail to send out public policy Action Alerts, funding opportunities, legislative updates, conference announcements, and other items of interest to the third of our participating organizations with access to e-mail. We also forward GLBT youth-related information sent to us by other organizations (a type of professional chain letter).

While e-mail is a quick way to send out information to a sub-set of the coalition, as with other modes of communication (phone, fax, and "snail mail"), some individuals and organizations are more comfortable using e-mail on a regular basis than others. Using e-mail is a habit. If the intended recipient of your message is not in the habit of checking messages, then it does not matter how efficient you are at disseminating information.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION
On a daily basis, NYAC uses e-mail to communicate with individuals and organizations not directly involved in the coalition. Staff receives and answers requests for information, receives regular e-mail from GLBT youth advocates from across the country, and often receives random items of interest that may or may not have a clear connection to GLBT youth (junk e-mail). In addition, NYAC "subscribes" to a few e-mail services through which it receives press releases and newsclips.

The use of e-mail and the Net has created a hyper-word-of-mouth world. For better or worse, the information sent out over the Net and through e-mail often takes on a life of its own. Over a period of two days, NYAC may send

out an Action Alert to its participating organizations. A number of them re-post the information to their e-mail lists, who then re-post the Alert, and NYAC receives its original Alert back tenfold from people who think it may be of interest to the coalition!

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

In addition to day-to-day communication, NYAC has used e-mail and the Net on two notable occasions. In both instances, online communication contributed to the ability of youth and their advocates to have their voices heard.

Youth Stories Project. In early 1995, NYAC began its Youth Stories Project which collects the writings of GLBT young people about their experiences in schools, families, and communities. Their stories are then used to educate Members of Congress, the Administration and other decision-makers about the day-to-day realities of GLBT youth. Out of the 100-plus letters received from young people documenting their lives, NYAC created a number of educational quote sheets including "Voices of Our Nation's Youth" and "Voices of Our Nation's Students."

Congressional Hearing on "Parents, Schools and Values." NYAC realized the full potential of the Net and online communication as an advocacy tool last fall. For almost a year, the Reverend Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition had sought a Congressional hearing as a forum for his views on HIV/AIDS education and "homosexuality in the schools." The hearing, "Parents, Schools and Values," was announced a week and a half before it was to take place.

Immediately, NYAC, in partnership with other national organizations, sent out Action Alerts over the Net by fax and by "snail" mail. The Action Alerts were re-posted on a number of Web sites frequented by GLBT youth. These young people and their advocates were quick to respond by flooding U.S. Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-MI) and his subcommittee holding the hearing with calls of concern. NYAC used the Net again during and after the hearing to encourage youth, teachers, parents, and service providers to send in written testimony for the Congressional Record of the hearing. NYAC received copies of testimony from youth and adults via e-mail.

While it is unknown how many people learned of the hearing and took action as a result of e-mail Action Alerts, it became quite clear that the Net is an efficient advocacy tool in getting the word out about antigay Congressional activity.

ADVANTAGES OF
ONLINE COMMUNICATION

For many GLBT young people, communicating via e-mail and online is a lifesaver. In fact, cyber friends may provide a rare sense of community for a young person who is otherwise alone. This is particularly true for rural and small-town youth where there are no support services available.

For other youth, the Net goes above and beyond basic support. Web pages and other online services created by and for young people provide an opportunity for them to express their creativity through the writing and graphics of online 'zines. Still others use the Net as an activist tool to exchange strategies, organize politically, and call attention to national issues affecting their lives.

For youth who have access to computers with modems through their schools or families, online communication is free or relatively inexpensive. E-mail is also convenient. As NYAC has found out, e-mail is sometimes a better alternative to playing endless games of phone tag.

DISADVANTAGES OF
ONLINE COMMUNICATION

The biggest barrier to online communication is access. Access, access, access. For young people who do not know where they will be sleeping that night or where their next meal will be come from, driving around on the Net's superhighway is likely a distant privilege.

In addition, many organizations or community-based groups providing support services for GLBT youth have budgets of less than a few thousand dollars. Organizations with larger budgets may prioritize their spending decisions to focus on basic human needs long before they set up a computer center for their young constituents.

Even if young people are able to access a computer (at a local cyber cafe, for example) they may not be able to take advantage of all the Net has to offer. Although designers of Web pages and online services have created fairly self explanatory graphics, using the Net requires that a person be computer literate.

As national and local organizations make decisions about how they will use online communication, they will need to be aware of who is being left out and to take into consideration the limitations of such a sophisticated and expensive technology.

CONCLUSION

Online technology has the potential to be one of the most powerful advocacy tools for GLBT youth and their allies. Our coalition can organize individuals and organizations in ways it never dreamed possible; it can distribute enormous quantities of information on public policy issues; and it can create communities for young people in need.

However, the NYAC coalition must not fall into the trap of thinking that the Net can replace face-to-face communication; a community-based rap group for youth; or the power of a young person walking into the office of a Member of Congress to talk about his or her life. The Net is not a panacea but a part of our effort to create a safer world for the GLBT youth we serve.

KIDS ONLINE:
WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN FROM CYBERSPACE

Ralph Tartaglione, M.P.H.

There is concern that children who use the Net are exposed to obscene language, molestation, harassment, and inappropriate material of a sexual or violent nature.

There is also an ongoing debate about the role of parents, the government, the service providers, and others involved in this new technology in protecting children from the negative aspects of such online services.

As a result, the television industry, online service providers, software developers, and citizens groups are offering solutions, suggestions, and educational materials to parents.

This article will make *SIECUS Report* readers aware of these services and explore ways to safely and effectively utilize them.

TV'S UPCOMING CONTROLS

In addition to deregulating the television industry, the Telecommunications Reform Act will require a V-Chip on all television sets manufactured after a still-to-be-determined date (no earlier than 1998). This chip, based on a newly created ratings system (also in development), will allow parents to block television shows which they feel are inappropriate for children. For now, parents can buy television sets or use satellite receivers with blocking devices to control the channels that children watch.

ONLINE SERVICE CONTROLS

Most of the online material accessible to children is benign, educational, and, quite often, fun. The major services—including America Online (AOL), CompuServe, and Prodigy—acknowledge, however, that children run the risk of negative experiences.

All of the major online services currently offer built-in parental controls for *chat rooms, newsgroups,* and *downloads.*

Chat rooms are so-called "rooms" where people can "chat" with other online users. Individuals can send instant messages to each other, can interrupt ongoing conversations between two or more users, and can even meet in "private rooms" to talk with like-minded users. Rooms are simply areas designated by the service to cater to specific topics. Yet, as any savvy user knows, they are not all that private. A person can create a name for a "private room" and then abruptly find himself/herself in a room of someone else's making.

Newsgroups are similar to message boards. Many are not monitored and could contain information inappropriate for children. Parents have several options. They can block all

newsgroups; block specific newsgroups; restrict access to newsgroups containing certain words (such as sex), or block the downloading of files (since many newsgroups offer unregulated graphics, sounds, animation, and photographs).

Downloading is similar to copying a floppy disk onto a hard drive. In the case of an online service, files from the service are sent by phone lines to a personal computer (PC).

Controls for AOL Users. AOL provides parents with the option of creating master accounts for themselves and sub-accounts for their children and other family members. This allows them to restrict access on sub-accounts. Parents also have the option of blocking software from all AOL libraries as well as the transfer of files from other sites.

Controls for CompuServe Users. CompuServe offers similar controls. It recently introduced a feature called "Wow!" which screens and blocks inappropriate or undesirable material on the Net and the Web and which blocks all e-mail until it is reviewed by parents. An access code is available for parents to deactivate "Wow!" when they want to use the computer.

Controls for Prodigy Users. Prodigy also offers similar controls. Parents can set up a Master User ID (with the Primary User ID ending in the letter A). They can then establish six other User IDs (each ending in another letter of the alphabet) and set access codes for each letter. Prodigy allows parents to restrict access to chat rooms, e-mail, and the Net.

OTHER SOFTWARE CONTROLS

There are several software programs that allow parents to tailor what they receive through online services. These include *CyberPatrol, Parental Guidance, SurfWatch,* and *CyberSitter.* Prices range from $39 upward.

CyberPatrol (WWWEB City, Inc.) provides:

* Automatic blocking of access to specified Net sites.
* A researched Net site list—called *CyberNOT*—containing material that parents may find objectionable. (A six-month subscription comes with the purchase of the software.)
* Access restrictions during personally determined times of the day and personally determined lengths of time.
* Control over the use of local applications.

Parental Guidance and Parental Guidance Beta (Providence Systems, Inc.) provides:
- Access to a data base of acceptable sites.
- Blocks to sexually explicit and inappropriate materials.
- A list of safe sites for children.

SurfWatch (Surfwatch Software, Inc.) provides:
- Blocks to specified Web and Net sites.
- Screening for newsgroups with sexually explicit material.
- Automatic subscription updates to a list of blocked sites.
- Customized lists of blocked sites upon request.

CyberSitter (Solid Oak Software, Inc.) provides:
- Blocks to defined areas.
- Alerts to parents when children access these defined areas.
- Analysis of all Net activity.
- A list of objectionable sites.
- Parental restrictions to chat rooms, newsgroups, and user-defined objectional phrases.
- Free updates for filter files.

GENERAL PARENTAL GUIDELINES

In an effort to assist parents, many online services are offering self-developed guidelines. Some have even created electronic bulletin boards where users can provide suggestions.

AOL's guidelines include:

- Responding to any notice of *Terms of Service* violation.
- Terminating accounts of individuals who participate in illegal or unethical activities.
- Refraining from monitoring private communications (such monitoring is illegal) but taking action in the event of a reported infringement.
- Encouraging caution when using the system and reminding members to exercise discretion and supervision when permitting children to access the Net.
- Encouraging parents to take active roles in their children's use of online services.
- Providing tips for children using online services.

A group of professionals—including publishers, telecommunications companies, online service providers, software firms and the Net—are currently developing a labeling and selection platform—"Platform for Internet Content Selection" (PICS)—to allow users worldwide to selectively control online content.

Two child welfare organizations—the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Interactive Services Association—recently published a guide titled *Child Safety on the Information Highway.*[1]

The guide outlines the benefits of online services, describes the major risks to children, addresses ways parents can reduce these risks, and explains ways parents can educate themselves about key issues. It is free and is available at public libraries.

Child Safety on the Information Highway also contains a tear-off page which parents may want to post next to the computer to remind their children of what to do—and what not to do—to protect themselves while online. It says:

- I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address, telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.
- I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will never agree to get together with someone I meet online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother and father along.
- I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.
- I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the online service.
- I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.[1]

CONCLUSION

Cyberspace offers children the potential for fun, exciting, and educational experiences unthinkable a few years ago.

To optimize the positive aspects of this technology and to maintain freedom of information, organizations are offering a wealth of services, products, and advice to parents on how to protect children exploring these information highways.

It is, however, the parents themselves who must take the time to understand the technology and the role they must play in monitoring its use. It is only in this way that they will prevent abuse and negative experiences. To do this, parents must communicate directly with their children to acknowledge the risks that exist in this technology, to explain how to reduce these risks, and to set up ground rules, based on the family's personal values and belief systems.

In an era when the impersonalization of technology is taking hold at an alarming pace, parents have a unique opportunity to talk with their children about important issues and to positively influence them as they grow into adults.

REFERENCE

1. L. J. Magid, *Child Safety on the Information Highway* (Arlington, VA: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1994).

Ralph Tartaglione, M.P.H., is the father of two children who keep him on his toes regarding computer technology and cyberspace.

"GO ASK ALICE!"
ANSWERS HEALTH-RELATED QUESTIONS FOR MILLIONS ON THE NET

Billie J. Lindsey, Ed.D., Director
Judith E. Steinhart, Health Educator
Healthwise University Health Service
Columbia University
New York, NY

When Columbia University's *Healthwise* staff created "Go Ask Alice!" three years ago, they had no idea that this Web-interactive health advice column would ultimately reach millions of people in more than 50 countries. That amazing number demonstrates the powerful role that technology plays—and will continue to play—in reaching people around the globe on important health-related topics such as sexuality.

"ALICE!" IS BORN

The idea for "Go Ask Alice!" was born in May 1993 when the university's *Healthwise* staff met one Monday morning to brainstorm ways to use the Net technology newly available to residence hall students at Columbia.

Soon after that meeting, a staff member worked with computer experts to meet Net requirements for this interactive question-and-answer service. A no-frills, typewritten version of "Go Ask Alice!" appeared in August on Columbianet. Early the next year, a Healthwise student intern developed a "dressy" graphic design that still exists today.

EXPANSION OF *HEALTHWISE*

Healthwise has a broad mission of helping students with such personal health issues as stress and time management, nutrition and fitness, alcohol and other drugs, sexuality and sexual health, self-awareness and self-esteem, sexual assault, assertiveness, and healthy relationships.

Until the creation of "Alice!," the staff primarily accomplished this mission through seminars, one-on-one education, newsletters, pamphlets, and awareness campaigns.

The column started small—with 86 students reading "Alice!" the first month. The numbers grew to over 1,200 readers per month by the end of the 1993-94 academic year. The truly dramatic increase took place when "Alice!" went on the Web the next school year. As a result of links to other sites, "Alice!" is now accessed *over a million times a month.*

HONEST ANSWERS WITH HUMOR

Even though the Web site facilitated the initial popularity of "Alice!," it is its content that receives kudos. Everyone praises its work in answering real questions from real people with frankness, honesty, sensitivity, and, yes, a sense of humor.

Everyone also acknowledges that a key element of the success of "Alice!" is its anonymity and its credibility. Many come to "Alice!" because they do not want to talk to their friends or *even* to their doctors because of the subject matter.

HOW "ALICE!" WORKS

"Alice!" receives over 200 new questions a week. Five staff members read the questions and each pick two they will answer that week. They make every effort to balance the health-care categories and to focus on the needs of college students in keeping with the mission of *Healthwise.*

Staff discuss their questions at Monday morning staff meetings. This gives them the opportunity to make certain they are not duplicating efforts. They answer the questions by Thursday and give them to the *Healthwise* director to review and edit before they are put on the Web. Medical professionals in the University Health Service also provide assistance, although they will not offer diagnoses or second opinions.

Because "Alice!" was developed for college students, it is not surprising that its sexual health and relationships sections are the most popular. On certain weeks 2,000 to 4,000 individuals look at the new questions relating to sexuality. In contrast, a general health question will have 200 to 250 readers (or "hits.")

The questions on sexuality are so frequent and the readers so numerous that the *Healthwise* staff recently decided to divide its "Sexual Health and Relationships" category into three more precise categories for easier reference and accessibility: "Sexual Health" (including STDs and contraception); "Sexuality" (anatomy, physiology, and human sexual response), and "Relationships."

CONCLUSION

The success of "Alice!" is indicative of people needing a convenient, credible, and trusted source to ask sensitive health-related questions. The staff works passionately to provide as much compassionate, understanding, nonjudgmental, and accurate, up-to-date information as possible.

"Go Ask Alice!" is accessed on the web at this address: **http://www.columbia.edu/cu/healthwise**

"INTERRUPTING THE CONVERSATION": STRIPPING SEXUALITY FROM MODERN COMMUNICATION

Daniel Daley
SIECUS Director of Public Policy

he burgeoning Net has resurrected old ghosts of censorship. The Hayes Board, the Comstock Act, and the Legion of Decency have all virtually returned from their places in history and onto the computer screen.

Moving quickly to try to strip expressions of sexuality from this form of mass communication, opponents of free speech on sexuality issues were instrumental earlier this year in the passage of the Communications Decency Act (CDA), which was part of the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-104). Under the guise of protecting young people from exploitation and accidental exposure to adult sexual material, the provisions of the CDA went beyond safeguarding children to become an encroachment on First Amendment-protected free speech.

THE LEGISLATION

The CDA is only part of a broad new effort to update laws applying to the telecommunications industry. The broader bill, among other things, eliminates barriers between local long-distance telephone companies and eases regulations on cable television firms and media companies. In short, the legislation addresses how these companies do business in the context of the current generation of technology.

Lawmakers, however, made certain that the reform of the telecommunication industry involved more than broadening the way they do business. Congress wanted these media companies to reform the content of their product—especially content related to violence and to sexuality. New provisions that apply to the television and cable industries include:

- companies face a $250,000 to $500,000 fine for transmitting obscene material over cable systems;

- cable, wireless cable, and other multichannel video services must scramble or block the audio and video portions of their adult channels;

- cable operators can drop any program from a channel reserved for public access, schools, or local government if the program contains obscenity, indecency, or nudity;

- new televisions with screens 13 inches or greater must, at a specified future date, contain the V-Chip (a comput-

er chip that would enable parents to block certain programming they feel is inappropriate for their family viewing); and

- the television industry has until February 1997 to voluntarily develop its own program ratings for violent, sexual, or indecent content and must communicate the ratings to viewers, otherwise the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will develop and enforce its own ratings.[1]

By far the most controversial revision in the telecommunications bill has to do with the broadening of prohibitions on obscene communication over phone lines to include computer use.

Previously, communication law banned the deliberate phone transmission of obscene material to annoy, abuse, threaten, or harass individuals. With the new bill, these laws extend to all methods of telecommunication. In addition, existing federal laws against importing obscene material or transporting such material across state lines for sale or distribution now apply to computer-transmitted materials.

The law bans the use of the Net and the Web to knowingly sending indecent material (that which depicts or describes sexual or excretory activities or body parts in a patently offensive way as judged by community standards) to a minor or to display such material in such a way that a minor might view it.

The term *indecency* does not contain exceptions for material with serious value without prurient appeal. (Without this exception even educational postings that deal with sexual issues—such as the SIECUS Web site—are suspect.) Computer network systems that knowingly allow such "indecent" postings are liable. The computer network decency standards of state and local governments are preempted by this new federal law.

Rep. James Exon (D-NE), one of the originators of the CDA, claims that communications reform is necessary to protect children under 18 years of age from access to pornography on the Net. However, many of the provisions protecting minors already exist as some form of federal law. For example, online pornography is already subject to criminal prosecution under existing obscenity law:

- 18 U.S.C., Sections 1465, 2252 and 2424(a) prohibit the distribution over computer networks of obscene and other pornographic materials harmful to minors.

- 18 U.S.C., Section 2252 also prohibits the illegal solicitation of a minor by way of a computer network.

- 18 U.S.C., Section 2423(b) bars the illegal luring of a minor into sexual activity through computer conversations.

Included in the indecency provisions of the legislation is an updated version of the 1873 Comstock Act, which bans the importation of, or interstate commerce in, "any drug, medicine, article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for producing abortion, or any indecent or immoral use; or any written or printed card, letter, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice" showing how to obtain abortion materials. (The Comstock Act was used in 1914 to arrest reproductive and sexual health pioneer Margaret Sanger on indecency charges for disseminating sexuality information regarding contraception.)

Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL) was responsible for adding this restriction on abortion information, which opponents refer to as an "online gag rule." Rep. Hyde inserted the provision outlawing the electronic dissemination of abortion information "designed, adapted, or intended for producing abortion or for any indecent or immoral use; or any... notice of any kind giving information, directly or indirectly, where, how, or of whom, or by what means any such mentioned article, matter, or things may be obtained or made..."

The Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 (and the CDA) easily passed the Senate (91-5) and the House (414-16) and was signed by President Clinton on February 8.

IMMEDIATE OUTCRY
ON CAPITOL HILL

The new law was met with immediate reaction. The online community said the law was state-sanctioned censorship that blackened Web pages. Prochoice Members of Congress immediately introduced legislation to change the language of the Comstock Act by amending the United States Code (U.S.C.) to eliminate the prohibitions on the transmission of abortion-related matters. (The House bill has nearly 50 cosponsors and the Senate bill has 10. Both are in committee and have seen no action.) The day after the CDA became law, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) introduced legislation to repeal it. While proponents of the new law quickly called on the Department of Justice to begin investigating online service providers for violations of the law, critics of the law filed lawsuits to prove it unconstitutional.

CDA IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)—with over 25 anticensorship groups including SIECUS—immediately

brought suit, *ACLU* v. *Reno,* against the U.S. Department of Justice claiming that the Act is constitutionally overbroad— a violation of First Amendment rights.

ACLU v. *Reno* was consolidated with *the American Library Association (ALA) et al.* v. *Department of Justice,* another suit brought by a 35-member coalition that includes America Online, Apple Computer, CompuServe, Microsoft, and Prodigy.

The case was heard before three Philadelphia federal district court judges: Judge Stewart Dalzell, Judge Ronald Buckwalter (both appointed by President George Bush), and Judge Dolores Sloviter (appointed by President Jimmy Carter).

During the five days of the proceedings, which concluded on May 10, the judges heard from a number of experts on computer technology, education, and free speech, including Bill Stayton, a member of the SIECUS Board of Directors and a clinical psychologist and professor. The plaintiff brought in high-speed modems and large computer monitors to directly expose the judges to the Net.

On June 12, the special three-judge panel released its unanimous decision that the CDA indeed violates First Amendment-guaranteed free speech. Judge Dalzell wrote in the decision that

> as the most participatory form of mass speech yet developed, the Internet deserves the highest protection from government intrusion.... Just as the strength of the Internet is chaos, so the strength of our liberty depends upon the chaos and cacophony of the unfettered speech the First Amendment protects.... (T)he Internet may fairly be regarded as a never-ending worldwide conversation. The government may not, through the CDA, interrupt that conversation.... Any content-based regulation of the Internet, no matter how benign the purpose, could burn the global village to roast the pig.[2]

Judge Buckwalter wrote that "...the First Amendment provides that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech unless that law advances a compelling governmental interest."[3]

Perhaps the most heartening element of Judge Dalzell's opinion for Net users and free-speech advocates was that the court findings "lead to the conclusion that Congress may not regulate indecency on the Internet at all."[4]

The judges supported the belief that recently available software is the best method for parents to control their children's use and exposure to material on the Net. In fact, it is the development of that kind of high-tech assistance that lead the judges to believe that the government has not met, in CDA, its constitutional obligation to employ the least restrictive means to regulate speech.

REACTIONS TO THE DECISION

Reactions to the judges' decision were predictable:

The Department of Justice is considering an appeal to the Supreme Court, and President Clinton says he:

> remains convinced...that our Constitution allows us to help parents by enforcing this [CDA] Act to prevent children from being exposed to objectionable material transmitted through computer networks. I will continue to do everything I can in my Administration to give families every available tool to protect their children from these materials. For example, we vigorously support the development and widespread availability of products that allow both parents and schools to block objectionable materials from reaching computers that children use. And we also support the industry's accelerating efforts to rate Internet sites so that they are compatible with these blocking techniques.[5]

Opponents of the CDA were clearly pleased with the decision as it granted First Amendment protections to online communication that are equal to—and possibly stronger than—printed materials.

Senator Leahy stated in a June 13 press release that:

> the court made the right decision. Let no one be confused—this is not a victory for child pornography or indecent material—but instead a victory for the First Amendment.... Many of the Members of Congress who voted in favor of the CDA have absolutely no idea of how the Internet works. Some of them think their computer is a TV on the fritz.[6]

Advocates for the CDA were angered. The Family Research Council claimed that "it is an arrogant decision which flies in the face of the Supreme Court and our society."[6] Senator Exon said that "this decision is not a surprise, nor is it a setback for the new law. It, in fact, clears the way for U.S. Supreme Court consideration."[7]

WHAT NEXT?

With possible consideration by the Supreme Court, the issue is far from resolved in the political realm. With such broad-based support by Congress and the Administration, there is a possibility that Congress will revisit the legislative language to develop a more constitutionally sound approach.

While the political and legal battles linger, there is much SIECUS supporters can do. SIECUS holds this position:

> When used in a manner appropriate to the viewer's age and developmental level, sexually explicit visual, printed, or online materials can be valuable educational or personal aids, helping to reduce ignorance and confusion and contributing to a wholesome concept of sexuality. However, the use of violence, exploitation, or degradation, or the portrayal of children in sexually explicit materials is reprehensible. Minors should be legally protected from all forms of sexual exploitation. Adults should have the right of access to sexually explicit materials for personal use. Legislative and judicial efforts to prevent the production and distribution of sexually explicit materials endanger constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of speech and press and could be employed to restrict the appropriate professional use of such materials by sexuality educators, therapists, and researchers.[8]

REFERENCES

1. *Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996* (Public Law 104-104).

2. S. Dalzell, R. Buckwalter, D. Sloviter, *American Civil Liberties Union, et al.,* v. *Janet Reno* (Civil Action No. 96-963) and *American Library Association, Inc., et al.,* v. *United States Department of Justice, et al.* (Civil Action No. 96-1458), United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Philadelphia, PA, June 11, 1996.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. *Statement by President Clinton in Reaction to Court Decision* (Washington: The White House, June 12, 1996).

6. "Arrogant Decision Contradicts Prior Cases on Pornography Distribution to Minors, FRC Says" (Washington: Family Research Council, June 12, 1996).

7. "Exon Issues Statement on Court Ruling on Decency Act" (Washington: U. S. Senate, June 12, 1996).

8. *1995 SIECUS Position Statements* (New York: Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, 1995).

SITES TO KEEP YOU INFORMED

American Civil Liberties Union
http://www.aclu.org

Computers and Academic Freedom
http://www.eff.org/CAF/cafuius.html

Electronic Frontier Foundation
http://www.eff.org

Freedom of Expression Links
http://insight.mcmaster.ca/org/efc/pages/chronicle/censor.html

National Coalition Against Censorship
http://www.ncac.org

SIECUS
http://www.siecus.org

R E V I E W S

C D - R O M S   O N   S E X U A L I T Y - R E L A T E D   I S S U E S

he software market explosion of the mid-1990s has created a number of new resources for sexuality educators as well as new opportunities to inform computer users.

Eight new CD-ROMS which are relevant to the work of sexuality educators are reviewed in this section. Readers should check the accompanying chart to see how they rate in terms of coverage of anatomy and physiology, sexuality, and sexual health as well as in terms of graphic quality, interactivity, ease of use, and comprehensiveness.

Overall the CD-ROMs were lacking in specific sexual content. Particularly noticeable in their absence were discussions on sexual and gender orientation; sexual dysfunctions; HIV/AIDS; and sexuality issues relating to children and the elderly.

The CD-ROMS were reviewed by Jennifer Ruocco and Donald A. Dyson. Ms Ruocco is a Ph.D. candidate in the University of Pennsylvania's Human Sexuality Education program. She holds a Master's degree in health sciences in population dynamics from Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health. Mr. Dyson, also a Ph.D. candidate in the University of Pennsylvania's Human Sexuality Education program, holds a Masters degree in social service from the Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. He is currently the director of education and programming at AIDS Delaware and is a licensed clinical social worker in the state of Pennsylvania.

A.D.A.M.: The Inside Story

A.D.A.M. Software, Inc., 1995
800/288-2326
$39.95

The Inside Story says it all. This is a multimedia educational tool that gives users all the information they could hope for about the inner workings of the human body. With exceptional graphics, illustrations, animations, and videos, this CD-ROM operates like an encyclopedia of the human system.

Target Audience. Although "the entire family" is the target audience, much of the information is too difficult for younger children. It is actually appropriate for middle-school-age children (third to fourth grades) and up. The system can, however, accommodate simple as well as complex inquiries.

Strengths. Practical uses abound. Almost any family member seeking information about the human body and how it works could use this CD-ROM. It is also an appropriate and useful tool for individual classroom research and includes interactive games that are both fun (if a little simplistic) and educational. In addressing anatomy and physiology, the content is comprehensive. Some specific information about external genitalia and puberty are lacking, but menstruation and conception are covered quite well, including discussions of major hormones and their roles.

Weaknesses. The sexuality content is virtually nil. While the internal workings of the body are covered quite well, the external body parts and what people do with them is handled rather squeamishly. The attitude of body negativity that is implicit in the program is cause for some concern. The program should not be used for general sexuality education if a sex- and body-positive approach is desired.

Of Note. A "modesty setting" allows users to block genitalia with fig leaves and prevent access to the reproductive system section. There is a "family scrapbook" with answers to questions about body responses and functions and "anatomy view" selectors, that allow users to change the sex and skin tone of graphics.

Computer Requirements

Macintosh: 68030/16MHz processor or higher, or PowerMac in native mode; System 7.0 or newer; 8 megabytes of RAM; 6 megabytes of hard drive; 13-inch monitor, 256 colors; Mac-compatible, double-speed (or faster) CD-ROM drive.

IBM: 386/33 MHz processor (486 or higher recommended); Windows 3.1 or higher; 8 megabytes of RAM; 5 megabytes of hard drive; SuperVGA color monitor, 256 colors; double-speed CD-ROM drive; MPC-compatible sound card; headphones or speakers; mouse.

Anne Hooper's Ultimate Sex Guide: A Sex Therapist's Personalized Program for Enriching Your Sex Life

Dorling Kindersley Multimedia, 1995
800/356-6575
$49.95

After Anne Hooper introduces herself in this CD-ROM, the user can start making decisions about what to review based on materials on her desk top: questionnaires, programs, case files, and a sexopedia. There is a great deal of information as well as hints, and ideas for enhancing sexual relationships. Nude models demonstrate discussions about heterosexual couples.

Target Audience. This program provides adult heterosexual couples and individuals, as well as older teens, with detailed information on sexual expression and enjoyment.

Strengths. Anne Hooper covers a variety of topics. Particularly interesting are discussions on developing strong sexual relationships—learning to communicate and negotiate, being assertive, overcoming anxiety. There is detailed information on sexually transmitted diseases (syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, HIV); sexuality and the disabled; contraception; anatomy and body image issues (vulva appearance, correct

female and male condom use). The CD-ROM allows the user to develop his or her own case file through questionnaires and other skill-based programs. The video quality is excellent.

Weaknesses. This CD is youth-oriented; there are virtually no older couples. The models are overwhelmingly young, white, beautiful, and heterosexual. This has the potential to create body-image anxiety in the user.

Of Note. Only users knowing the access code (which comes with CD) are able to utilize the CD.

Computer Requirements

IBM: 386/33 MHz processor (486 or higher recommended); Windows 3.1 or higher; 4 megabytes of RAM; 5 megabytes of hard drive; SuperVGA color monitor, 256 colors; MPC-compatible CD-ROM drive; 8- or 16-bit sound card; headphones or speakers; mouse.

Dr. Ruth's
Encyclopedia
of Sex

Creative Multimedia, 1994
503/241-4351
$29.99

This CD-ROM journey starts with Dr. Ruth welcoming us into her office. From here, she lets users choose from a variety of activities. They can click on the diploma hanging on the wall and get information about her life and professional training. They can click on the radio and listen to highlights from her radio program. They can click on the television and watch her videos. They can click on the dictionary and check the definition of words (even slang!). They can listen to Dr. Ruth herself as she answers questions; or they can research a topic of interest in her *Encyclopedia of Sex.* Users can custom-tailor the CD-ROM to their individual needs and interests.

Target Audience. This CD-ROM is designed for people of all ages—although much of it appears too sophisticated for pre-teens.

Strengths. Dr. Ruth covers a lot of ground—from kegel exercises to Kama Sutra to transvestitism. She even includes an animated video of how to put on (and take off) a condom. A unique strength is the definition of slang terms *(AC/DC* and *daisy chain* are defined, among others). Of all the reviewed CD-ROMs, this is the most thorough—especially her *Encyclopedia of Sex* and *Dictionary of Sexual Terms.*

Weaknesses. While a strength of the CD-ROM are the pictures (which the user can view with the click of the mouse), implications and relevancy are sometimes questionable. For example, a photo of a therapist's chair under a section on "Homosexuality" implies mental illness. Some of the language is antiquated. For example, an *erectile dysfunction* is referred to as "impotence."

Computer Requirements

IBM: 486 MHz processor (486 or higher recommended); Windows 3.1 or higher; 4 megabytes of RAM; 5 megabytes of hard drive; SuperVGA color monitor, 256 colors; double-speed CD-ROM drive; MPC-compatible sound card; headphones or speakers; mouse.

The Joy of Sex

Phillips Interactive
Media International
& Mitchell Beazley
International Limited, 1995
303/739-4131
$59.99

The Joy of Sex joins the computer age with a slick reworking that almost succeeds in hiding that this is recycled information. The idea of having video graphics is interesting, but the videos are usually one-sided chats with Mitchell Beazley. The information,

wonderfully presented in the original book, is presented again verbally on the screen and accompanied by a mini-copy of the book itself.

Target Audience. The target audience is defined as lovers who want to explore their sexuality, and content is generally aimed toward individuals 18 years of age and older. It is excellent for individuals or couples wishing to explore themselves as sexual beings as well as improve their knowledge.

Strengths. Sexuality is presented as a positive part of human expression. In addition, imagination is encouraged and exploration and practice lauded as the ways to enhance sexual experience. The videos are honest and straightforward.

Weaknesses. While sexuality content is extensive, there is no mention of orientation, transgenderism, or power issues in sexual relationships. Of particular concern is the dated nature of the HIV/AIDS content. Mrs. Beazley talks of "carriers" and "non-carriers." Much of the information is not only pejorative but also incorrect. She speaks of the "escape" of AIDS from the homosexual community into the heterosexual population. Heterosexism is rampant, leaving homosexuality exclusively in the realm of AIDS and bisexuality altogether invisible.

Of Note. Special characteristics include a lock-out code (requiring a four-digit number to activate the program), and "guided tours" (vignettes showing individuals exploring their own sexuality with themselves and their partners). They are a great idea: comprehensive and honest.

Computer Requirements

IBM: 486 MHz processor (486 or higher recommended); Windows 3.1 or higher; 4 megabytes of RAM; 6 megabytes of hard drive; SuperVGA color monitor, 256 colors; double-speed CD-ROM drive; MPC-compatible sound card; headphones or speakers; mouse.

THE CD-ROMS AT-A-GLANCE

The eight CD-ROMS in this article were evaluated in terms of how they address three general subject areas: anatomy and physiology, sexuality, and sexual health. A rank of 5 indicates excellent coverage; a rank of 1 indicates incomplete or severely limited coverage; an n/a (not applicable) indicates no coverage. They were also evaluated on graphic quality, interactivity, ease of use, and overall comprehensiveness. A rank of 5 was excellent; a rank of 1 was poor. They were also reviewed to determine their specific learning domain: K= a focus on knowledge; A= a focus on attitudes; P= a focus on practice.

	A.D.A.M.: The Inside Story	Anne Hooper's Ultimate Sex Guide	Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia of Sex	The Joy of Sex	The Love and Relationship Test	The Magic School Bus	Nine-Month Miracle	The Ultimate Human Body
KAP Rating	K	KAP	K	K	A	K	KAP	KAP
Graphics	5	5	5	5	1.5	3.5	5	4
Interactivity	5	4	5	5	2	4	5	5
Ease of Use	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5
Overall Sexuality Comprehensiveness	3	4	3	n/a	2	3	5	4
COMPREHENSIVE CONTENT AREAS								
Anatomy and Physiology								
Female Sexual Anatomy	1	3	2	n/a	n/a	1	5	4
Female Reproductive Anatomy	5	3	5	n/a	n/a	5	4	5
Male Sexual Anatomy	1	4	3	n/a	n/a	2	5	5
Male Reproductive Anatomy	5	3	5	n/a	n/a	5	3	5
Menstrual Cycle	5	3	5	n/a	n/a	5	4	5
Conception/Gestation	5	2	5	n/a	n/a	5	3	5
Lifespan Sexuality Issues	n/a	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	3
Sexuality								
Orientation	n/a	3	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	3	4
Gender	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3
Erotic Enhancements	n/a	5	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	5	4
Sexual Decision-Making	n/a	5	n/a	n/a	3	n/a	4	4
Sexual Skill Building	n/a	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4
Sexual Communication	n/a	5	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	5	4
Contraception/Abortion	1	4	1	n/a	1	n/a	5	3
Sexual Health Issues								
Women's Issues	3	3	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	5
Men's Issues	1	3	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4
Sexually Transmitted Infections	n/a	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4
HIV/AIDS	n/a	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4
Sexual Dysfunctions	n/a	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	4

CD-ROMS ON SEXUALITY-RELATED ISSUES

The Love and Relationship Test

Virtual Entertainment, Inc., 1995
617/449-7567
$19.95 plus $5.00 shipping and handling

On what basis does a person evaluate love and relationships? *The Love and Relationship Test* attempts to answer the question and then relate the answer to particular relationships in particular settings. It allows individuals to measure their worth as sexual beings on six different scales: marriage, compatibility, love, love aptitude, intimacy, and romance.

Target Audience. The target audience is young adults who are exploring their current, past, or prospective relationships—or those of their friends. In reality, the program is likely to interest audiences as young as 12 or 13, and does not contain material too graphic for users of this age.

Strengths. The CD-ROM is not recommended for classroom or educational use. Rather, it is an amusing excursion for the curious into an evaluation of their intimacy and relationship skills. The consistent use of inclusive language (in all but the "marriage test" sections), promotes acceptance of varying orientations and choices of sexual partners.

Weaknesses. Problems arise when users realize how difficult it is to answer questions with a definitive "right" or "wrong." In addition, test results often read like vague horoscopes and provide little in the way of useful feedback.

Of Note. The ability to take tests alone or with one or more people is this CD-ROM's most engaging characteristic. The results can lead to lively conversations—or even arguments. Let the user take care!

Computer Requirements

Macintosh: 68030/16MHz processor or higher, or PowerMac in native mode; System 7.0 or newer; 4 megabytes of RAM; 1 megabyte of hard drive; 13-inch monitor, 256 colors; Mac-compatible, double-speed (or faster) CD-ROM drive; mouse; printer that supports graphics.

IBM: 386/33 MHz processor (486 or higher recommended); Windows 3.1 or higher; 8 megabytes of RAM; 1 megabytes of hard drive; SuperVGA color monitor, 256 colors; double-speed CD-ROM drive; MPC-compatible sound card; headphones or speakers; mouse; printer that supports graphics

The Magic School Bus Explores the Human Body

Scholastic Inc.,
Microsoft Corporation, 1994
800/360-7561
$44.95

The Magic School Bus offers riders a fantastic journey through some of the major systems of the human body. With its enthusiastic tour guide, Ms. Frizzle, and the ever-helpful lizard, Liz, the journey is full of fun and laughter, providing hours of info-tainment.

Target Audience. Although the program does not identify a target audience, *The Magic School Bus* is fun for kids of all ages. Because of the difficulty of navigating some of the bus systems, the program appears most appropriate for middle-school students. Because much of the content is simplistic, the program would likely lose its appeal for children beyond the sixth grade. Older children and even adults will, however find its humor and games engaging and educational enough to maintain their interest for a good half-hour.

Strengths. The program is ideal for a classroom computer laboratory. It is also an engaging educational program for home use. It is clear that the program designers wanted to create a visually pleasing and adventurous approach to education. The gadgets encourage exploration and creative problem solving by users wanting to figure things out for themselves.

Weaknesses. Uses for the sexuality educator are virtually nil. There is absolutely no sexuality content presented by Ms. Frizzle and her class. In fact, the closest one gets to the reproductive anatomy is a visit to the kid-

neys and a sheepish announcement that Arnold "really has to go...really." The gadgets are both a positive and a negative. While they are interesting and fun, they are also often confusing and frustrating. It is sometimes difficult to get the bus to go where you want it to go.

Of Note. The most amazing characteristic of the program is the abundance of gadgets and gizmos. There is something different to try on each journey through the body.

Computer Requirements

IBM: 486/33 MHz processor (486 or higher recommended); Windows 3.1 or higher; 4 megabytes of RAM; 5 megabytes of hard drive; SuperVGA color monitor, 256 colors; double-speed CD-ROM drive; MPC-compatible sound card; headphones or speakers; mouse.

Nine-Month Miracle

A.D.A.M. Software, Inc., 1995
800/288-2326
$49.95

The Nine-Month Miracle attempts to comprehensively cover the process of human reproduction. It almost succeeds beautifully. A sister to *A.D.A.M: The Inside Story*, this CD-ROM is visually excellent. It falls short, however, in its underlying values.

Target Audience. Almost anyone can load *The Nine-Month Miracle* into the computer and find within its system something targeted directly at his or her age level and interest. Its target audience is virtually anyone who wants to learn a bit more about human reproduction.

Strengths. This is an excellent reference program for a classroom computer station. It is also an excellent tool for adults or parents who want to learn more about the reproductive process or who wish to teach their children about the process. Because there is so much information, adults will need to guide children to the developmentally appropriate sections.

C D - R O M S   O N   S E X U A L I T Y - R E L A T E D   I S S U E S

Weaknesses. Sexual anatomy is covered poorly. The values inherent in the program are made obvious in the way that the material is presented or omitted. Sexuality itself is absent from the equation. Intercourse is represented by backlit figures hugging in a window with a heart glowing above their heads. The "family scrapbook" shows only dual-parent, heterosexual families, thus devaluing other family configurations.

Of Note. Special characteristics include modesty and "child's view" settings. The latter includes interactive games and simpler explanations of the reproductive process. This attempt at developmental appropriateness is generally successful, although it indirectly suggests that sexuality issues are not appropriate for children.

Computer Requirements

Macintosh: 68030/16MHz processor or higher, or PowerMac in native mode; System 7.0 or newer; 8 megabytes of RAM; 6 megabytes of hard drive; 13-inch monitor, 256 colors; Mac-compatible, double-speed (or faster) CD-ROM drive.

IBM: 386/33 MHz processor (486 or higher recommended); Windows 3.1 or higher; 4 megabytes of RAM; 7 megabytes of hard drive; SuperVGA color monitor, 256 colors; double-speed CD-ROM drive; MPC-compatible sound card; headphones or speakers; mouse.

The Ultimate Human Body: A Multimedia Guide to the Body and How It Works

Dorling Kindersley Multimedia, 1994
800/356-6575
$49.95

The Ultimate Human Body gives readers the opportunity to explore one of three major areas: the body machine, body organs, and body systems. "Body machine" covers questions about bodily functions (but none that are below the navel or sexuality-related). "Body organs" includes chapters on the bladder, and the large and small intestines (but, again, nothing below the abdomen). "Body systems" allows users seeking in-depth sexuality information to choose hormonal or reproductive subcategories relating to either the female or male body. Users may also look up terms in the dictionary.

Target Audience. Sound bites help users, especially younger students, with the correct pronunciation of words. This is particularly helpful for those beginning to understand human biology. This is a great resource for both the classroom and home as there is much information to benefit all ages.

Strengths. The graphics are very good. Photographs generated by electron micro-

scopes create a powerful visual experience. Animations are easy to understand. The reproductive system is thoroughly outlined—with topics ranging from menstruation and ovulation to conception, sex-determination and birth. The development of a fetus is clearly and thoroughly documented at each stage.

Weaknesses. One major disappointment is the language. In one section, *sperm* is described as the "male's seed" to be "received" by the vagina. In a *Mission Impossible*-esque maneuver, the ovum "escapes from the body unnoticed amongst the debris" during menstruation. In addition, a double standard is apparent in some discussions. For example, there is no mention of *feminine hygiene* in the discussion about *menstruation.* And don't even think about viewing female sexual anatomy. Finally, the dictionary does not include such key terms *sexual intercourse, clitoris,* and *vulva.*

Computer Requirements

IBM: 386/33 MHz processor (486 or higher recommended); Windows 3.1 or higher; 4 megabytes of RAM; 5 megabytes of hard drive; SuperVGA color monitor, 256 colors; double-speed CD-ROM drive; MPC-compatible sound card; headphones or speakers; mouse.

2 NEW BOOKS: *SEX, LAWS, AND CYBERSPACE; GAY & LESBIAN ONLINE*

Two new books on sexuality and the Net will interest *SIECUS Report* readers.

Sex, Laws, and Cyberspace: Freedom and Censorship on the Frontiers of the Online Revolution addresses the legal issues and ethical debates surrounding the worldwide growth of the Net and commercial online services.

It examines the current battles taking place in both pro- and anti-regulation camps. The authors—Jonathan Wallace and Mark Mangan—offer a spirited defense of the freedoms now under fire, and suggest ways to monitor the Net without stifling it.

The authors have established a Web site at www.spectacle.org/freespch/

Gay & Lesbian Online is an encyclopedic book which contains a wealth of information on such topics as HIV/AIDS, books, organizations, history, and law.

Author Jeff Dawson has worked as associate editor of *PC Home Journal* and also senior editor of *MacHome Journal.*

The publishers have established a Web site at http://www.peachpit.com.

Sex Laws and Cyberspace costs $24.95. Contact: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 115 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212/462-7900.
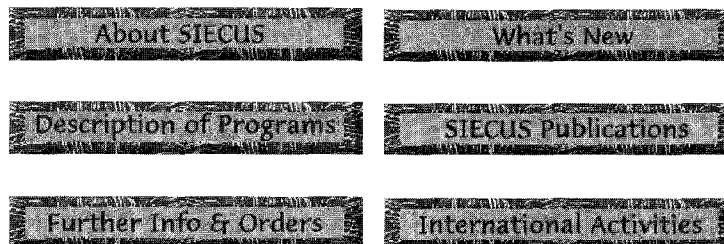
Gay and Lesbian Online costs $15.95. Contact: Peachpit Press, 2414 Sixth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710. Phone: 800/283-9444.

THE SIECUS WEB SITE

http://www.siecus.org

SIECUS is a national, private, nonprofit advocacy organization which affirms that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of living. Incorporated in 1964, SIECUS develops, collects, and disseminates information, promotes comprehensive education about sexuality, and advocates the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices.

About SIECUS   What's New

Description of Programs   SIECUS Publications

Further Info & Orders   International Activities

SIECUS launched its Web site in March to increase communication and education efforts among sexuality education professionals worldwide.

Its homepage, which is duplicated above for *SIECUS Report* readers, allows Net users to click on the six SIECUS-related subject areas for more information.

About SIECUS provides users with general information about the agency and its work. This includes an overview of SIECUS positions, services, and member benefits.

What's New contains current information on activities relating to sexuality education from numerous sources and organizations. This includes curricula updates, evaluation reports, book reviews, workshop and conference notices, media coverage, legislative reports, new resources, and Web site/Listserv links.

Description of Programs includes information on all SIECUS activities. This includes community advocacy, school-based sexuality education, Guidelines initiatives, HIV/AIDS prevention education, international sexuality education, public policy activities, underserved community programs, and Mary S. Calderone Library resources.

SIECUS Publications includes full texts of the agency's bibliographics, fact sheets, and Community Action Kit. It also includes selected articles from the *SIECUS Report* as well as the complete SIECUS Publications Catalog.

Further Information & Orders includes contact information for users needing more information on a particular subject or wanting to know about membership or publications.

International Activities provides international users with detailed information on SIECUS and its work on behalf of comprehensive sexuality education worldwide.

The SIECUS Web site is housed on the Institute for Global Communication (IGC) Network, the U.S. partner of the Association for Progressive Communication (APC), the most extensive global computer network in the world dedicated specifically to serving nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and citizen activists working for social change.

Composed of a consortium of international member networks, APC provides communications and information-sharing tools—such as e-mail, full Net access, and selected electronic conferences—to over 50 partner networks worldwide. These networks, in turn, provide over 40 million people who currently have a Net e-mail address with the opportunity to communicate with each other

Many of these partner networks provide the only e-mail accesss for NGOs in their countries, and at a much lower cost than by fax, phone, or service network. Through this global partnership, APC offers vital links of communication to tens of thousands of NGOs, activists, educators, policy-makers, and community leaders in 133 countries.

SIECUS has subcontracted the services and expertise of Virtual Production Services (VPS), which offers Net presence and Web design services to not-for-profit organizations, especially those involved in international negotiations, global environment and development issues, and education and health care.

VPS clients include the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Pew Charitable Trust, the National Wildlife Federation, the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

The SIECUS Web site is http://www.siecus.org

SIECUS has developed a list of World Wide Web sites with information on sexuality issues. They are organized into the following categories.
• Activism
• Adolescent Sexuality
• Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals
• HIV/AIDS
• Population
• Religion and Sexuality
• Sexual Abuse and Assault
• Sexuality and Disability
• Sexuality Issues/Safer Sex
• Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
• Transgendered/Cross Dressers/
  Transvestites

The list was compiled to provide *SIECUS Report* readers with a starting point in accessing Web sites providing information and discussion on sexuality issues.

Sites are only listed under one category. Readers should check all related categories for additional sites.

This list is not all-inclusive. It is also not intended as an endorsement of any of the sites. Many Web sites are linked to others. SIECUS staff did not access the linked sites.

This list was compiled by Shauna Croom, Mac Edwards, Caroline Kelley, Amy Levine, Stacie Renfro, and Monica Rodriguez with the help of Dr. Sandra Bargainnier and Rea Carey.

Activism
ACLU (The American Civil Liberties Union)
http://www.aclu.org
Human Rights Campaign
http://www.hrcusa.org
NARAL (National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League)
http://www.naral.org
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
http://www.ngltf.org

Adolescent Sexuality
About Sexual Orientation:
http://www.cyberspace.org/~altkids/kids.html

Bureau for At-Risk Youth
http://www.at-risk.com

Many Web sites listed on these two pages contain information on adolescent sexuality. Check these categories: "Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals," "HIV/AIDS," "Sexual Abuse and Assault," "SexualityIssues/Safer Sex," "Sexually Transmitted Diseases," among others.

Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals
A Different Light Bookstore
http://www.adlbooks.com/~adl/index.html
Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere
http://www.colage.org
Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International
http://abacus.oxy.edu/QRD/www/orgs/glpci
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network Against Homophobia
http://www.glstn.org/freedom
GLAAD
http://www.glaad.org/glaad
Lesbian Moms
http://www.lesbian.org/moms
!OutProud!, The National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth
http://www.youth.org/outproud
Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
http:www.pflag.org
Partners Task Force—Home Page
http://www.eskimo.com/~demian/
PlanetOut
http://www.planetout.com

HIV/AIDS
AIDS Mosaic
http://www.thoughtport.com/aids
AIDS Research Information Center
http://www.critpath.org/aric

AIDS Resource List
http://www.teleport.com/~celinec/aids.shtml
The Body: A Multimedia AIDS and HIV Information Resource
http://www.thebody.com/index.html
CDC Home Page (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)
http://www.cdc.gov
CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse
http://www.cdcnac.org
List of U.S. Resources
http://www.bocklabs.wisc.edu/duni/aidsresources.html
Morbitity and Mortality Weekly Report
http://www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/mmwr.html
Project Open Hand (HIV/AIDS Support)
http://www.openhand.org
Rural Center for the Study and Promotion of HIV/STD Prevention
http://www.indiana.edu/~aids
WHO (World Health Organization) Global Programme on AIDS
http://gpawww.who.ch/gpahome.htm

Population
The Population Council
http://www.popcouncil.org
US Agency for International Development
http://www.info.usaid.gov
World Wide Web Virtual Library: AIDS
http://planetq.com/aidsvl.index.html
Zero Population Growth
http://www.zpg.org

Religion and Sexuality
The Interfaith Alliance
http://www.intr.net/tialliance

**Ontario Centre for
Religious Tolerance**
http://www.kosone.com/people/ocrt/
ocrt_hp.htm

Sexual Abuse and Assault
**ATSA (Association for the
Treatment of Sexual Abusers)**
http://www.teleport.com./~atsa

Community United Against Violence
http://www.xq.com/cuav/index.html

**Domestic Violence Information
Center**
http://www.feminist.org/other/dv/
dvhome.html

**MALE (Males Assisting, Leading
and Evaluating)**
http://www.malesurvivor.org

Moving Forward, Inc.
An Organization Addressing Childhood
Sexual Trauma
http://idealist.com/moving-forward

**National Coalition
Against Sexual Assault**
http://www.cs.utk.edu/~bartley/ncasa/
ncasa.html

Rape Victims Advocates
http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/~loakleaf/
RVA.html

**Sexual Assault
Information Page**
http://www.cs.utk.edu/~bartley/
saInfoPage.html

**VOICES in Action, Inc. (Victims of
Incest Can Emerge Survivors)**
http://www.voices-action.org/index.html

Sexuality and Disability
**American Foundation
for the Blind**
http://www.afb.org/afb

**National Rehabilitation
Information Center**
http://www.naric.com/naric

Roeher Institute
(for mental and physical disabilities)
http://indie.ca/roeher

Sexuality Issues/Safer Sex
Condoms and Latex
http://www.cmpharm.ucsf.edu/~troyer/
safesex/condoms.html

Condoms 101
http://www.umich.edu/~wespin/
old-c101index.html

Go Ask Alice!
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/healthwise

Kinsey Institute
http://www.indiana.edu/~kinsey

**Planned Parenthood
Federation of America**
http://www.ppfa.org/ppfa

Risks of Oral Sex
http://www.cmpharm.ucsf.edu/~troyer/
safesex/persp/perspectives.1.2.html

Safer Sex Page
http://www.safersex.org

**SHAPE
(Sexual Health Advocacy
and Peer Education)**
http://www.missouri.edu/~shape

**Sexually Transmitted
Diseases (STDs)**
**ASHA (American Social
Health Association)**
http://sunsite.unc.edu/ASHA

**Planned Parenthood
On Line**
http://www.ppca.org/index.html

The STD Homepage
http://med-www.bu.edu/people/
sycamore/std/std.htm
(Graphic visual pictures of STDs)

**Transgendered/Cross Dressers/
Transvestites**
**Transgender Forum &
Resource Center**
http://www.cdspub.com/tgfrc.html

**AEGIS
(American Educational
Gender Information Service)
Information Center**
http://www.ren.org/rafil/AEGIS.html

**FTM (Female to Male)
International**
http://www.ftm-intl.org/intro.html

**IFGE (International Foundation
for Gender Education)**
http://www.transgender.org/tg/ifge

The Plaid
http://www2.wintermute.co.uk/users/
snuffles/The_Plaid/gender.html

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*Editor's Note: If you have problems finding one
of these Web sites, search for it by title using a
search engine.*

SIECUS WEB SITE PROVIDES
INFORMATION ON VARIETY OF SUBJECTS

The SIECUS Web site—http://www.siecus.org—will provide online users with information in all of the general subject
areas on these two pages. The site provides both fact sheets and bibliographies.

Teaching About Sexuality and HIV: Principles and Methods for Effective Education

Evonne Hedgepeth, Ph.D.,
and Joan Helmich, Ph.D.
New York University Press
1996; 410pp.;
$20/paper; $55/cloth

Each time I hire a new community health educator, I confront the same problem: How can I help this new employee learn the essentials (the content, the principles, the theory) involved in sexuality education? It is relatively easy to find resources dealing with content, but it is almost impossible to find a concise, readable resource dealing with the learning process, with participative education, and with democratic teaching methodologies.

Teaching About Sexuality and HIV: Principles and Methods for Effective Education combines that critical theoretical underpinning with practical applications. In addition, it is easily accessed, anecdotally illustrated, and, as a result, immediately useful.

This new book is an excellent resource for everyone in this field because it provides a firm grounding in both education and learning theory. For example, sections on "Learning Modalities" and "Multiple Intelligences" go beyond telling us *how* to incorporate varied methodologies and approaches into our teaching. They also tell us why we need them.

In addition, they review specific methodologies such as role play, introspective activities, and problem solving. In the process, they make practical suggestions for using, and *not using*, these methodologies—always with an emphasis on the safety and quality of the learning experience for students and groups.

Perhaps the book's most impressive strength is its very scope and depth. *Teaching About Sexuality and HIV: Principles and Methods for Effective Education* combines education and learning theory with an overview of the field of sexuality education. It gives the readers tools to implement the theory in ways that are always aimed at creating the safest, most productive learning experience for the student.

This is a book I will keep on my desk or in my briefcase: for ideas, for reminders, for inspiration. I will give a copy to each of my educators. I hope they'll write in it, turn down page corners, attach notes. If they do, I'll know they are better educators. That is the gift to the field that Dr. Hedgepeth and Dr. Helmich have given us.

Reviewed by Maggi Ruth P. Boyer, M.Ed., A.C.S.E., director of training and education at Planned Parenthood of Bucks County, PA. She is also on the faculty of the Graduate Training Program for Clergy, the Penn Council for Relationships at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Centerfold Syndrome: How Men Can Overcome Objectification and Achieve Intimacy with Women

Gary Brooks, Ph.D.

Jossey-Bass
350 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94104
415/433-1740
$22.00

Upon hearing of *The Centerfold Syndrome*, I tried to pigeonhole it. Would it be a pro-censorship manifesto or an account of the various ways in which such materials harm women? Many such books exist, so I wondered how psychologist Gary Brooks's new effort could make an original contribution.

Happily, I discovered that it fills a void by dealing directly with the ways pornography harms not only women but also men. In this respect, *The Centerfold Syndrome* should prove helpful for educators, counselors, and anyone interested in this influence on men.

According to Dr. Brooks, the centerfold syndrome is the dysfunctional way in which many heterosexual men relate to women's bodies. Brooks believes that the syndrome (which includes, but is not limited to, voyeurism and objectification) is caused by rigid gender role expectations that are socialized and reinforced by pornography. Ultimately, Dr. Brooks concludes that men who challenge their gender role expectations and begin to see women as people rather than objects will live happier, more intimate lives with their partners.

Dr. Brooks offers a perspective that is thoughtful, highly readable, and, above all, persuasive. By providing transcripts from a men's group which he led, Dr. Brooks demonstrates how the objectification of women prohibits men from achieving intimacy with their partners. The book's greatest strength is its persuasive argument that a male sexuality based on the objectification of women is socially constructed, and that which has been constructed can be deconstructed.

Educators will find Dr. Brooks's literature summaries extremely useful. He takes complicated topics (such as the social construction of gender) and puts them into understandable forms. He also makes abstract ideas (such as *objectification*) comprehensible by providing examples from his own life and male socialization.

Although the focus of the book is on heterosexual relationships, Dr. Brooks explains in his preface that this bias comes not from heterosexism, but rather from his range of professional experience. While he notes that many of the themes in the book do not apply to the lives of gay and bisexual men, homophobia among men who use pornography does receive attention. In this respect, readers interested in homophobia among groups of men may find some of the transcripts interesting.

Readers who take a more libertarian approach to pornography will certainly find fault with some of Dr. Brooks's basic assumptions. Despite these concerns, *The Centerfold Syndrome* will be of value to even the most critical readers, for it is well crafted and original in its approach.

Reviewed by Jon Lasser, M.A., who is currently teaching courses on sexuality and working on his doctorate degree at the University of Texas in Austin.