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Glossary

A 5-year-old is not ready to confront the world. This should be obvious, but it doesn't seem that way to many free-speech advocates, who are angry that some libraries around the country have installed software on their computers to block out Internet material that's unsuitable for children.

The objections are coming from some usual sources: the American Civil Liberties Union, for example, and Web publishers. But even the American Library Association has opposed the use of filtering software.

Traditionally, the library has been a safe place for children. And librarians have long been the guardians of public virtue. While they have been firm supporters of the First Amendment, they haven't generally interpreted it to mean that they should acquire large holdings of published pornography and make such materials available to children.

Librarians have always acquired books according to their own discrimination and their sense of what is appropriate to their neighborhoods. They generally refuse to buy, among other things, pornography. This isn't censorship; it's common sense.

If a library were to have a section of pornographic books, would we want these to be printed in large, colorfully illustrated, lightweight volumes, shelved near the floor where they were easily available to children? Probably not. But we have gone to a great deal of trouble to insure that computers are user friendly, with brightly colored graphics and easily accessible information.

Material on the Internet is not only uncensored but also unedited. Adults can be expected to make their own evaluations of what they find. Children, who lack experience and knowledge, cannot.

The debate over the filtering of the Internet is a bit like the debate over grants given out by the National Endowment for the Arts. It's all tangled up in false cries of censorship. Censorship is a legal term; it refers to government action prohibiting material from being circulated. This is very different from a situation in which a museum or an arts panel decides not to use public money to finance an exhibition or an artist.

Commendably, our society defends freedom of speech

一个5岁的孩子还没有准备好面对这个世界。这应该是显而易见的，但在许多自由言论倡导者看来却并非如此，他们对全国各地的一些图书馆在其电脑上安装软件以阻止不适合儿童的互联网材料感到愤怒。

这些反对意见来自一些常见的来源：例如，美国公民自由联盟和网络出版商。但甚至美国图书馆协会也反对使用过滤软件。

传统上，图书馆是儿童的一个安全场所。而图书馆员长期以来一直是公众美德的守护者。虽然他们一直是第一修正案案的坚定支持者，但他们一般不会把它解释为意味着他们应该获得大量已出版的色情作品并向儿童提供这些材料。

图书馆员总是根据他们自己的鉴别力和他们对什么适合他们社区的感觉来购买书籍。他们通常拒绝购买，除其他外，色情制品。这不是审查制度；这是常识。

如果图书馆有一个色情书籍区，我们会希望这些书被印成大的、色彩鲜艳的、轻巧的书，放在靠近地板的地方，让孩子们很容易拿到吗？也许不会。但是，我们已经花了很大的力气来确保计算机是用户友好的，有色彩鲜艳的图形和容易获得的信息。

互联网上的材料不仅没有经过审查，而且也没有经过编辑。可以期望成年人对他们发现的东西作出自己的评价。而缺乏经验和知识的儿童则不能。

关于互联网过滤的争论，有点像关于国家艺术基金会拨款的争论。这一切都被虚假的审查制度的呼声所纠缠。审查制度是一个法律术语；它指的是政府禁止材料流通的行为。这与博物馆或艺术小组决定不使用公共资金资助一个展览或一个艺术家的情况截然不同。

值得称赞的是，我们的社会极力捍卫言论自由。但是，允许一切言论和允许每个人都能听到言论是有区别的。我们现在应该知道这一点，因为我们已经看到了接触电视和电影暴力对儿童的影响。

美国公民自由联盟和美国图书馆协会说，在电脑中使用过滤软件是审查制度，因为它阻碍了获得宪法保护的言论。但这些呼声令人费解且毫无根据。图书馆所宣称的唯一控制是对一小部分观众的控制，而不是对材料本身的控制。此外，这种控制有一个强大的历史先例：父母的指导甚至比宪法还要古老。

对儿童的保护应该是本能的。一个人可能有权站在大街上向路人吐出污言秽语，但他会被命令离开幼儿园的教室。

with great vigor. But there is a difference between allowing everything to be said and allowing everyone to hear it. We should know this by now, having seen the effects that exposure to television and movie violence has on children.

The A.C.L.U. and the American Library Association say that the use of filtering software in computers is censorship because it blocks access to constitutionally protected speech. But these cries are baffling and unfounded. The only control libraries are asserting is over a small portion of the audience, not over the material itself. Moreover, this control has a powerful historical precedent: parental guidance is even older than the Constitution.

The protection of children should be instinctive. A man may have the right to stand on the street and spew obscenities at passers-by, but he would be ordered to leave a kindergarten classroom.

It is absurd to pretend that adults and children are the same audience, and it is shameful to protect the child pornographer instead of the child.

假装成人和儿童是相同的受众是荒谬的，保护儿童色情者而不是儿童是可耻的。



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