

News Track



introduced a virtual—yet visual—duo that patrols news and discussion Web sites, presenting a constant reminder to users that police and others are watching them. Jingjing and Chacha (together the names represent the Chinese characters for “police”) may appear as innocent cartoons, but their purpose is real. The *Financial Times* reports these animated police officers debuted in the thriving southern city of Shenzhen, where real-life police set up an Internet Surveillance Centre. The screen icons, they say, scare off anyone who might be tempted to use online anonymity to break China’s laws. Law enforcement officials in Shenzhen



claim the mere appearance of the duo makes users think twice before posting sensitive messages; in fact, upon their arrival, the number of postings that had to be filtered out because of suspect content fell reportedly more than 60%.

VIRTUAL VISITATION

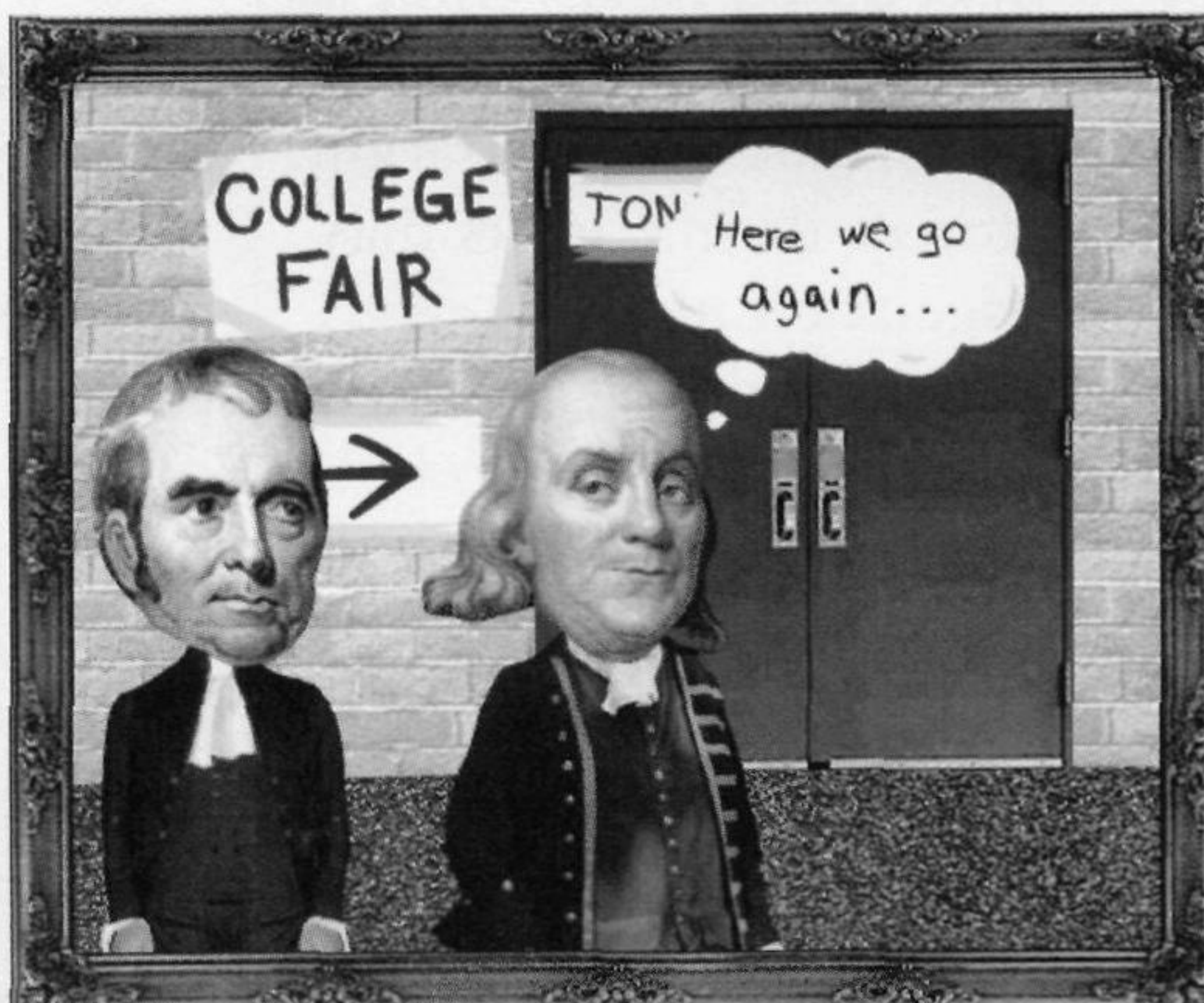
Divorce in the digital age brings new meaning to parental visitation rights. An increasing number of states in the U.S. are agreeing to “virtual visitation” as an official option, particularly when parents live great distances apart. The Associated Press reports that parents, and courts, are finding that visiting with children via Webcam not only sustains families between in-person visits but also helps ease the tensions that come with divorce and makes it more likely that noncustodial parents will pay their child support regularly. Advocates of virtual visitations say the greatest challenge now is getting the word out; most lawyers and judges are still not aware of it as a viable option or hesitate to authorize it because it is not addressed in the current law. One

matrimonial lawyer said: “In my experience, I have found that parents who feel connected to their children are much more invested and much more gracious.”

CAMPUS CAMPAIGNS

In an effort to increase their pools of potential applicants, an increasing number of colleges are creating inventive and sometime unorthodox

recruitment approaches. *USA Today* reports more schools are creating increasingly elaborate recruiting Web sites, often cutting the amount of money they spend on print advertising to beef up their



online presence. Franklin & Marshall College, for example, has created a series of fun videos depicting (namesakes) Benjamin Franklin and Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall on a road trip in search of a college. MIT now features 15 blogs on its site, including 10 written by students. DePauw University offers a virtual tour of its campus via an interactive game that mimics the popular Quest games. And California Polytechnic State University created personalized VIP pages on its Web site for more than 100,000 prospects this year. But don’t count out the basics, cautions Charles Nolan, vice provost for enrollment at Santa Clara University: “High-tech is a good way to get [students] interested. But if they visit and can’t find a parking place and the school is not hospitable, then all that hard work is negated.” **C**

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