The IT Act is the main body of legislation that provides a framework for extending the rule of law into cyberspace. Apart from defining various terms like “hacker”, “hacking” etc., it also lays down the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour.

The internet’s freedom coupled with the rising number of Indians who are getting online presents an explosive combination. Youth always have something on their mind and the internet gives them an easy outlet. This desire to express themselves is met with a poor understanding of the internet’s ability to propel information at the speed of light, to be read by people from places we did not even think existed.

A comment posted or a status update that offends someone’s sensibilities can get you into trouble. This has already been seen with a number of young Indians getting arrested for posting comments that have been deemed defamatory to one prominent personality or another.

With India’s internet population set to rise and rise in the coming years, it is likely that offences filed under the IT Act would become more numerous. In times to come, the number of such cases making headlines will increase and make the IT Act one of the most talked about laws.

Apart from laws governing actions of private individuals, the IT Act of 2000 and subsequent amendments made in 2008 also deal with intermediaries and their relations with the State. Rules relating to securing documents with digital certificates, cyber-terrorism, digital pornography are also dealt with in great detail.

With an increasing number of transactions done online, the IT Act also provides legal sanctity to online transactions effected by means of electronic communication such as e-commerce.

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