

POLICING THE INTERNET: *JAKE BAKER* AND BEYOND

March 9, 1995

QUESTION FIVE: HOW SHOULD LAWMAKERS BE EDUCATED AS TO CURRENT TECHNOLOGY?

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PROFESSOR LOWENSTEIN: The woman in red.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: . . .

But what I really wanted to know about, you've got people like Scott Charney, I know that the police have people being trained in the computer theft and things like that, because most (inaudible) people's telephone maybe a place of names and addresses, because there's (inaudible)

You've got politicians deciding on the law, just like the S314 . . . [but they] don't know what it is they're deciding.

Is there any way that we can require that people know what they're doing?

(Laughter)

(Applause)

PROFESSOR LOWENSTEIN: Danny Weitzner, that's sort of your job, isn't it?

(Laughter)

DANIEL WEITZNER:

Right. I can tell you what we're doing specifically in response to Senator Exon's bill, which I should say, not only bans the creation or transmission of obscenity, indecency, but also lewdness, lasciviousness, filthiness and annoyance.

(Laughter)

DANIEL WEITZNER:

That's also my job, you know.

What we are trying to do with the help of some of the companies that produce this technology is really just to set-up demonstrations so that we can bring a little lap top into Senator Exon's office and say, "Here, see, it's not quite what you thought it was."

I do think, though, that there is a broader experiential gap, which is that just seeing it isn't having the experience of using it. The only thing I can say -- I mean, I think this is a broader problem with the Congress and the political establishment. As we know, George Bush didn't know what a

supermarket scanner was. That's probably more serious, had more serious implications than not knowing what an E-mail address is.

So there is a broader problem. It's safe to say that there will probably be some unthinking laws made. But I think on the encouraging side, the people who use this technology really are getting better and better at making their voices heard.

There are about 80,000 people who signed a petition on the Internet against the Indecency Bill. We have been working with the ACLU and some other groups to encourage people on the Internet to learn more about Exon's bill and to contact their senators, and that is happening at a substantial rate.

So, you know, you have to do this piece by piece, person by person.