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The Internet Community

In today's world, ownership belongs to the person or people who physically own an object. This holds true except when it comes to a little thing called the Internet. Currently, the Internet is not owned by any one person or group but the only group that might be able to claim ownership is the world phone companies. The phone companies are the one group of companies that maintain the Internet backbone. Today the Internet belongs to no one and the Internet is a community onto itself. The Internet community is the only group who really owns the Internet and is the one group of people who can and should right the laws that effect the Internet.

A little Internet history will help me describe who owns the Internet. In 1957, USSR launched Sputnik and the US Government formed Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). Then in 1968, ARPA awarded the ARPANET contract to BBN and the Internet was born. Then in 1996, ARPA turned the backbone over to a few phone companies who currently maintain the backbone. The belief that some people hold that the US Government had owned the Internet should hold today that the world phone companies now own the Internet if any one truly does own the Internet. The problem with this train of thought is that the backbone is only one part of the Internet and it does not take into consideration the other parts of the Internet. The parts of the Internet are backbone, switches or hubs, servers, and wires to connect everything. In the beginning of the Internet or as it was first called ARPANET was the four colleges on the network—University of California at Los Angeles, SRI (in Stanford), University of California at Santa Barbara, and University of Utah—these four colleges owned their servers. Since then everyone who has joined the Internet or ARPANET brought with them their own server and wires to connect the server to the network of computers. Today the Internet and even in the past with the ARPANET was not

owned by anyone. The rules that govern the Internet or the ARPANET were set by the host servers who were the portal for access to the network. Now with the Internet in every county in the world, it is imposable or even illegal for any one country to create laws that control any part of the Internet.

Today the US Government is trying to pass laws that control what is on the Internet and how people access the information. Currently there are two laws that the US Government has passed trying to control the Internet. The two laws are Digital Millemium Copyright Act and The Digital Millemium Copyright Act is about “preventing circumvention of technological measures used by copyright owners to protect their work and on tampering with copyright management information.” The children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) is about, “It is unlawful for an operator of a website or online service directed to children, or any operator that has actual knowledge that it is collecting personal information from a child, to collect personal information from a child in a manner that violates the regulations prescribed under subsection.” Now that the US Government has these two laws on the books it expects the entire world to follow the laws written by the US Government. I am sorry but it is unlawful for the US Government to create laws and expect those laws to apply to the entire world.

It is my belief the only people who can create such laws is either a body of representation by every country on the Internet or the Internet Community. The closest thing the world has to a complete group of world representation is the United Nations but not every country is represented. This all boils down to the fact the Internet is not owned by anyone therefore only the Internet community has the legal right to create laws to govern the Internet in any way. All other ways of trying to control the Internet is illegal. One might use international law as a place to try to create laws to control the Internet. The one problem with this argument is that not every county on the Internet conforms or abides buy those international laws.

In today's Internet world the only group of people who can legally write and pass laws that have control over any part of the internet is the Internet Community. So I ask everyone to stop visiting the internet and join the Internet Community and have a say in the internet and help create laws to govern the Internet because that is the only way the internet can have laws. We must police our selves because no one country has the legal right to pass laws to govern the Internet.