A bind over Net regulation

Yes, we need laws to police cyberspace, some say

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While everyone—from the author of an online post to the reader to the person who is the subject of the post—has rights, these rights will come into conflict from time to time. Laws are hence necessary to protect rights, authorize disputes and ensure fair outcomes, said Mr Nair.

Agreeing, former NMP and blogger Siew Kum Hong said: "Self-regulation needs to be on top of the agenda, but if we do not have laws, we will have chaos in cyberspace." Mr Nair also added that a "person who is affected by (an online) post should be entitled to take legal action if the post is libelous or defamatory." He added that "self-regulation may not work in the real world, too, why do we expect it to work in the cyberworld?"

Even more so when people can act anonymously and therefore be held accountable in the cyberworld.

Mr Nair added: "A person who is affronted by (an online) post should be entitled to confront the person who wormed and published it."

And that means having access to the writer's identity, and if the post is in private, to be able to take it down and end any further posting for any loss suffered, he said.

Dr Brian Lee, head of Communication Programme at NUS, added that even in Singapore, the Internet still has not been "safe enough".

"Last month, a polytechnic student who tweeted a racist remark was flamed online. Her personal information like addresses, employment and other things were posted online. That is not self-regulation, that is not acceptable. If we don't expect self-regulation to work in the real world, why do we expect it to work in the cyberworld?" he said.

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