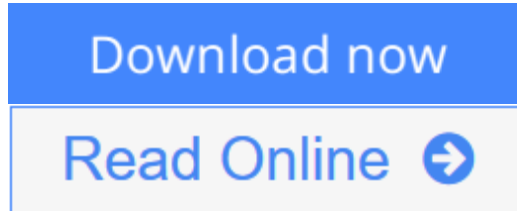# Confronting the Internet's Dark Side: Moral and Social Responsibility on the Free Highway

By Raphael Cohen-Almagor

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Terrorism, cyberbullying, child pornography, hate speech, cybercrime: along with unprecedented advancements in productivity and engagement, the Internet has ushered in a space for violent, hateful, and antisocial behavior. How do we, as individuals and as a society, protect against dangerous expressions online? Confronting the Internet's Dark Side is the first book on social responsibility on the Internet. It aims to strike a balance between the free speech principle and the responsibilities of the individual, corporation, state, and the international community. This book brings a global perspective to the analysis of some of the most troubling uses of the Internet. It urges net users, ISPs, and liberal democracies to weigh freedom and security, finding the golden mean between unlimited license and moral responsibility. This judgment is necessary to uphold the very liberal democratic values that gave rise to the Internet and that are threatened by an unbridled use of technology.

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Confronting the Internet's Dark Side: Moral and Social Responsibility on the Free Highway By Raphael Cohen-Almagor Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #408954 in Books
- Published on: 2015-06-30
- Released on: 2015-06-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .83" w x 5.98" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 400 pages

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Editorial Review

Review
"The dramatic growth of internet technologies are creating a new era in democratic life, a crisis for the established media, and possibilities for participatory politics that challenge liberal institutions. This book documents today's turning point with urgency and profound clarity. Ithiel de Sola Poole's Technologies of Freedom (1983) has become a classic work defining the information society, with media technology its axis. Confronting the Internet's Dark Side is of that quality, a potential classic that defines for us moral responsibility in the new media age."
Clifford Christians, Research Professor of Communications, University of Illinois

"Cohen-Almagor recognizes that if social responsibility on the Internet is to be implemented, discussions will need to focus on how and why one can draw limits to what one does on the internet as well as what ISP's and countries can do with the internet. Not everyone will agree with the solutions proposed, but in light of the detailed stories concerning hate sites (towards groups or humanity in general), webcam viewing of actual suicides, the exponential growth of child pornography etc., it is hard to fall back on knee jerk First Amendment responses."
Robert Cavalier, Carnegie Mellon University

"In this book, Raphael Cohen-Almagor makes a forceful case for greater social responsibility on the part of Internet service providers and all who surf the Web. Calling on us to think and act like citizens of the online world, he insists that we have a moral obligation to confront those who abuse the technology by using it to disseminate hate propaganda and child pornography, or by engaging in cyber-bullying, or by aiding and abetting terrorism. Fast paced, philosophically sophisticated, and filled with illustrative and sometimes heart-wrenching examples, the book is intended to serve as a wake-up call and will challenge its readers to reconsider their views of free expression in the Internet age."
Stephen L. Newman, York University

"[A] groundbreaking book ... a must-read for researchers and policy planners as well as laymen interested in social responsibility on the Internet."
Jadgish N. Singh, Jerusalem Post

About the Author
Raphael Cohen-Almagor is Professor and Chair in Politics at the University of Hull. He has published extensively in the fields of political science, law, ethics and philosophy, including The Right to Die with Dignity (2001), Speech, Media and Ethics, 2nd edition (2005) and The Scope of Tolerance (2007). His second book of poetry, published in 2007, is entitled Voyages.

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