

Critical Thinking

Advanced GCE

Unit **F504**: Critical Reasoning

Mark Scheme for January 2011

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Analyse

1 Is Document 1 an argument? Justify your answer with reference to the types of reasoning in Document 1. [8]

This question tests the ability to distinguish argument from other types of reasoning. Candidates should be aware in particular of the sort of reasoning found in newspapers, magazines etc where a train of reasoning is mixed with report, anecdote, storytelling, explanation, unsupported opinion, and a conclusion may be implied but not stated. Candidates should be able to judge whether there are reasons which give rational grounds to persuade the audience to accept a conclusion. Candidates should be able to judge whether the whole or only part of a passage is an argument, and should be able to identify the different kinds of reasoning used, such as reporting, storytelling, explaining, opinion-giving etc.

	Performance Descriptors
Level 4 7 - 8 marks	<p>Reasonable judgement about whether the document is an argument or not which is well supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> justified thinking about whether some or all parts of the reasoning (such as reasons, explanations, report, anecdote etc) give rationally persuasive support to a stated main conclusion or not, or, when appropriate, whether there might be an implied but unstated conclusion. a clear and correct indication of what that conclusion might be (if appropriate). justified thinking about what types of reasoning, such as explanation, report or a short argument as part of the whole document, are present in the document.
Level 3 5 - 6 marks	<p>Judgement about whether the document is an argument or not which is mostly supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> thinking about whether some or all parts of the reasoning (such as reasons, explanations, report, anecdote etc) give rationally persuasive support to a stated main conclusion or not. a clear and reasonable indication of what that conclusion might be (if appropriate). some acceptable thinking about what types of reasoning, such as explanation or report, are present in the document.
Level 2 3 - 4 marks	<p>Judgement about whether the document is an argument or not which is partly supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple thinking about whether some parts of the reasoning (such as reasons or anecdotes) give rationally persuasive support to a stated main conclusion or not. a reasonable although possibly inaccurate indication of what that conclusion might be (if appropriate). simple thinking about what types of reasoning, such as background information, are present in the document.
Level 1 1 - 2 marks	<p>If a judgement is present, it is likely to be arbitrary, unsupported or contradicted. It may be accompanied by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> simplistic comments about whether some parts of the reasoning support a main conclusion or not. an inaccurate and unreasonable indication of what that conclusion might be (even where this is inappropriate). simplistic comments about elements of argument, such as 'it has reasons and a counter argument.'
Level 0	No creditworthy material.

Indicative content

This is not fully an argument. It is reasoning combined with reporting and use of examples. The author intends to persuade us that Barack Obama should not have called for China to abandon the so-called practice of internet censorship, by showing that there are good reasons for China to engage in this practice. However, the conclusion is implied not stated, so the passage as a whole is not an argument. The author shows that 'internet censorship is far from a simple issue of right and wrong,' using examples from the US, Germany and Korea. This, together with the unsupported claim that the 'government has a responsibility to better manage the internet, keeping harmful content out of public view', supports the implied conclusion.

Alternative interpretation: This is an argument which supports the conclusion that 'internet censorship is far from an issue of right and wrong,' by giving examples from the US, Germany and Korea and some reasons in the last paragraph. The first paragraph reports a quotation from Obama which sets the context for the argument. The author implies that Obama was wrong, but does not argue this.

Accept up to Level 3: "This is an argument which supports the conclusion that 'the government has a responsibility to better manage the internet,'" on the grounds that this could possibly be interpreted as meaning 'the government should better manage the internet.' This suggested main conclusion would be reasonable IF it did say 'should'.

Example Level 4 part answer

It is unclear to say whether Document 1 is an argument. The apparent main conclusion 'internet should also serve public good' is not supported well, if at all by the reasons given within the document. The reason gives as an example in paragraph 6 by Lee Myung Bak ('false information is disseminated prompting social unrest that spreads like an epidemic') only supports the idea that the internet is becoming a 'tool of illicit activities' rather than supporting the idea that the internet 'should also serve public good.' ... even if we suggest that 'calling for the freedom of expression and non-censored internet' as paragraph 1 is the main conclusion, the reasons above provided in the document and a potential reason in paragraph 8, 'the government has a responsibility to better manage the internet, keeping harmful content out of public view,' still does not persuade the audience to accept this conclusion. The evidence from different countries from paragraph 3 – 5 does not help support the conclusions either, therefore, although the structure can be seen as an argument, the context of the document is not an argument.

Example Level 3 part answer

Document 1 is probably an argument because although it seems merely to inform (for the first aim of the six paragraphs at least), and give support for the claim that 'internet censorship is far from a simple issue of right and wrong' through the use of examples. .. furthermore, at the beginning of the seventh paragraph the author expresses their opinion and gives three reasons for their agreement... they come to their conclusion in paragraph 8, 'the government has a responsibility to better manage the internet,' ... therefore, although it is not an argument, it can still be regarded as an argument of the elements above, because aiming to persuade.

Example Level 2 answer

Document 1 is an argument because it contains a conclusion, 'the government has a responsibility to better manage the internet keeping harmful content out of public view.' This is supported by the reasons in paragraph 7. Document 1 also contains a counter argument in paragraph 1. the conclusion, counter argument and reasons make document 1 an argument even if paragraphs 3 – 6 are just facts.

Example Level 1 part answer

I don't think document 1 is an argument. Although it has the conclusion that 'government has a responsibility to better manage the internet' there are sufficient strands of reasoning to say it's an argument. It merely seems to list countries and say their view on the situation... the reasoning in paragraph 7 'the internet is making it much easier for ill intentioned people to wreak havoc...' is the only reason in the document. Paragraph 6 shows why Mr Lee regulates the internet...

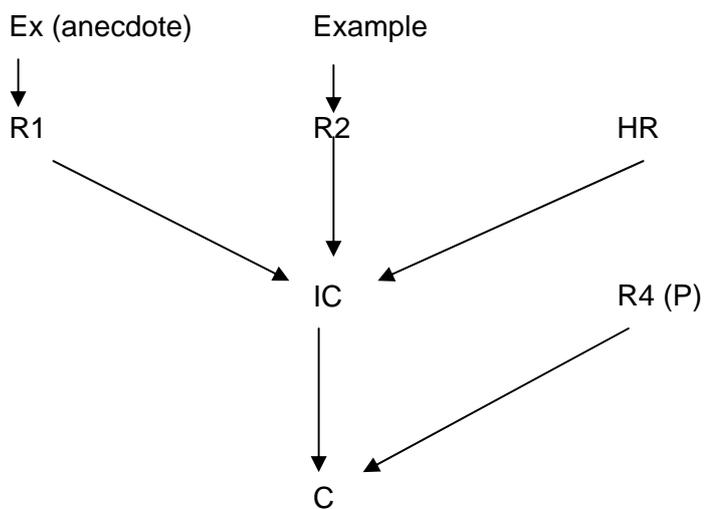
2 An internet user posted this response to Document 1:

China is absolutely right to regulate the internet. Regulations about abusive materials can keep young children safe. I have two teenage children and I am worried about what they might see on the internet. Regulation can reduce anti-social rumour mongering and anti-government activity. For instance, if you have to use your real name for posts, you are less likely to be libellous or subversive. Furthermore, if you give too much freedom to those who have impure purposes, it will be harmful to other internet users. So regulation is necessary to keep us safe from criminals. Governments have a duty to protect people from harm.

Analyse in detail the structure of the reasoning in this response by identifying elements of argument (such as reasons, intermediate conclusions etc) and showing their relationship to each other. [12]

	Performance Descriptors
Level 4 10 - 12	<p>Candidates demonstrate thorough understanding of argument structure, including some complexity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurately identifying the main conclusion AND • accurately identifying most elements of reasoning (including significant elements) using appropriate terminology AND • showing accurately how the main elements relate to each other, using words or a diagram. <p>Mistakes are rare and not serious.</p>
Level 3 7 - 9	<p>Candidates demonstrate a clear understanding of argument structure by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying the main conclusion AND • identifying most significant elements of reasoning accurately using appropriate terminology • OR identifying the conclusion and some other elements of reasoning with some accurate indications of how they relate to each other. <p>There may be mistakes, occasionally serious ones.</p>
Level 2 4 - 6	<p>Candidates demonstrate basic understanding of argument structure by:</p> <p>At the top of the level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying the main conclusion and perhaps one other element accurately <p>OR at the bottom of the level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurately identifying a number of elements but NOT the main conclusion. <p>There are likely to be serious mistakes, and possibly some gist.</p>
Level 1 1 - 3	<p>Candidates demonstrate limited understanding of argument structure by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inaccurately identifying almost all elements of argument • providing poor paraphrases or overall gist.
0	No creditworthy material.

- R1** Regulations about abusive materials can keep young children safe.
(Personal anecdote not really part of the argument but of tenuous relevance. Accept example.)
I have two teenage children and I am worried about what they might see on the internet.
- R2** Regulation can reduce anti-social rumour mongering and anti-government activity.
- Ex** For instance, if you have to use your real name for posts, you are less likely to be libellous or subversive.
- R3 (HR)** Furthermore, if you give too much freedom to those who have impure purposes, it will be harmful to other internet users.
- IC** So regulation is necessary to keep us safe from criminals.
- R4 (P)** (Accept as IC) Governments have a duty to protect people from harm.
- C** China is absolutely right to regulate the internet.



Evaluate

- 3 Is the reasoning stronger in Document 1 or Document 3? Justify your answer with selective reference to key strengths and weaknesses in each document and their effect on the strength of the reasoning. [20]

	Performance Descriptors
Level 4 16 - 20	<p>Candidates come to a reasonable conclusion about which document has the stronger reasoning supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mostly well justified evaluation of key strengths and weaknesses in the reasoning of both documents, which may show understanding that a single point could be a strength interpreted in one light yet a weakness interpreted in another light. • consistent, justified evaluation of the effect of this strength and weakness on the overall strength of the reasoning in the documents, focussing on the way specific claims are supported and the effect this has on the overall strength of the reasoning. • effective weighing up of the which document is stronger overall. <p>Inappropriate forms of evaluation may occur. The language is clear and mostly precise.</p>
Level 3 11 - 15	<p>Candidates come to a reasonable conclusion (perhaps slightly too strongly stated) about which document has the stronger reasoning, mostly supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mostly relevant and mostly justified evaluative comments which refer mostly to either weakness or strength in the reasoning. They may concentrate on the evaluation of one document. • evaluation of the effect of this strength or weakness on the overall strength of the reasoning in the documents with some reference to parts of the reasoning. • weighing up of some strengths and weaknesses of the documents with some effectiveness. <p>Inappropriate forms of evaluation may occur. The language is mostly clear.</p>
Level 2 6 - 10	<p>Candidates come to a conclusion which may be overstated about which document has the stronger reasoning, partly supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some basic evaluative comments with an attempt at justification, possibly referring to only strength or weakness in both, only to strength in one document and only to weakness in the other or to strengths and weaknesses in only one document. They may attribute strength or weakness inappropriately and may disagree with the reasoning or provide counter arguments rather than evaluating. • commenting in a simplistic way about the effect of a strength or weakness on the overall strength of the reasoning, perhaps merely, 'this weakens the conclusion.' • some attempt to weigh up some strengths and/or weaknesses <p>The language is simple and may lack precision.</p>
Level 1 1 - 5	<p>Candidates may come to a conclusion which does not follow from their reasoning or they may have reached no conclusion at all. This may be accompanied by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited comment about the reasoning in one or both documents with little or no explanation. • any attempt to comment on the effect of a strength or weakness on the overall strength of the reasoning is limited, arbitrary or consists only of stock, pre-learned phrases which are not applied to this reasoning. • any weighing up is assertive and unconnected to other points and may be contradictory. <p>Answers may be descriptive or incoherent. The language does not always communicate candidates' thinking.</p>
0	No creditworthy material.

Indicative content:

Document 1 is stronger than Document 3 to the extent that it has a clear structure of reasoning, uses examples well to show that 'internet censorship is far from a simple issue of right and wrong,' and gives reasonable support at the end to the idea that the state should regulate the internet to some extent. However, the reasoning in Document 1 does not fully support the implied conclusions, that 'China is right to regulate the internet,' or that, 'Obama was wrong to ask China to abandon the so-called practice of internet censorship,' so could be seen as weaker than Document 3 in this respect.

Document 3 is stronger than Document 1 to the extent that the idea, that Berners-Lee's kitemarks of website quality can't come too soon, is given reasonable support by the anecdote about Rassinier and the reasonable assertion that the ordinary reader would not spot the bias. However, the point is made to a great extent by narrative, opinion, juxtaposition of ideas and some ranting, which makes the structure of the reasoning weaker than Document 1.

Neither Document ever quite states its intended conclusion. Document 1 clearly intends to persuade us that, 'China is right to regulate the internet,' so, 'Obama was wrong to ask China to abandon the so-called practice of internet censorship.' It goes part of the way towards supporting these conclusions. It does show that internet regulation is not a black and white affair; examples such as US and German attempts to regulate harmful content, and South Korea's regulation that people should use their real names online, do show that there is a debate to be had about a government's role in regulating the internet. Added to the reason that the internet is making it easier for the ill-intentioned to wreak havoc, and the idea that the internet should serve the public good, there probably is a case for some regulation of the internet. If we accept the principle of the Government's responsibility to protect us, then we can accept some Government duty to protect us from harmful aspects of the internet.

However, this would only support the implied conclusions if China's regulation of the internet was limited to the sorts of examples mentioned – child pornography and racial hatred, and if the social unrest mentioned is not genuine, democratic opposition to repressive government. We also need to question what the 'harm' is: criminal activity or political disagreement. If China is only limiting criminal activity, then we might think it is right to regulate the internet. If the political disagreement verges on terrorism or might bring down the state and lead to instability, civil war and/or economic crash, it would be possible to make a case for regulating its expression on the internet. However, if it is crushing reasonable opposition, we might think that it is not right. As we do not know from this article how exactly China is regulating the internet, we cannot judge whether it is right or not, and cannot therefore accept the implied conclusions. This is a significant weakness in the reasoning.

Aaronovitch is reporting and narrating and giving opinion rather than arguing per se, so his piece does not have a single stated or implied conclusion. However, there is a thread of reasoning based on the idea of regulating the quality of websites. Starting from a concern expressed by Sir Tim Berners-Lee about conspiracy theory, Aaronovitch tells the anecdote of his morning checking the quality of one entry on Wikipedia. He does provide enough support to show that there is a bias on the Wikipedia entry. Together with the assertion, which is reasonable, that the ordinary reader would not know about this bias, this does give some support to the claim that people need help to discriminate between websites of different quality, which gives some support to the idea that Berners-Lee's kitemark is a good idea, expressed as, 'can't come too soon.' To this extent, there is some strength to the reasoning.

However, the reasoning itself is unclear. The attempt to answer a counter argument that 'the dissemination of stupid ideas, and their equation with sensible ones, didn't need the internet,' degenerates into a rant. He may be right about this, but he is asserting his opinion vehemently with some illustration rather than supporting it with argument. The juxtaposition of intelligent design with flat-earth thinking and anti-Semitism is clever and provocative, but it is somewhat unfair and not reasoning.

So, overall, although both documents are problematic, there is probably more strength in Document 1.

NOTE that candidates gain marks not for their opinion about which document is stronger, but for the quality of their justification of this opinion.

Example Level 4 part answer

Overall the reasoning in Document 3 is probably stronger. Even though the argument in Document 3 is largely based on a personal anecdote by the author which is a very specific example, it is reasonable to assume that many people are not privy to the sometimes poisonous and dangerously subtle information that they come across on the internet. In contrast, Document 1 provides selective examples and omits countries/states that have not passed internet regulation through law. It therefore presents one side of the debate only and is a weak argument ... as the reasons it gives in support of internet regulation are vague... On the other hand, although Document 3 does not state an explicit conclusion, its implied conclusion is that ideas such as the 'World Wide Web Foundation' that helps the average internet user to be more discerning in using the internet can only be beneficial, and this is supported relatively well by the reasoning...

Example Level 3 part answer

Both documents 1 and 3 are fairly weak in assessing whether or not the internet should be regulated or not. Document 1 has only one reason that can support its main conclusion ... to its credit though document 1 does use a counter assertion by stating Barack Obama was 'calling for the freedom of expression and non-censored internet' China lacks on his visit here... Document 3 appears to be a rather dull rant that uses an example that stretches for 4 paragraphs of boring reading, that the author uses to support his main conclusion. The author also significantly weakens his argument ... by only regaling us with a dull tale about his usage of Wikipedia, a website that is universally acknowledged as a most unreliable source of information. Add to that the fact that people will be able to use their own initiative when searching out reliable sources... to summarise, both documents are weak with document 1 shading it for strength of reasoning.

Example Level 2 part answer

There is very little reasoning in either of the documents 1 or 3. The example of Paul Rassinier in Document 3 is used to support the reason that 'kitemarks can't come a moment too soon' strengthens the reason as, even though it is a single incident, it illustrates the problems with websites like Wikipedia, where anybody can put whatever they want... The counter argument in document 1 weakens the reasoning as the author does not deal properly with the counter argument. He dismisses Obama's views about 'freedom of expression and non-censored internet' by saying that 'internet censorship is far from a simple issue of right and wrong.' When Obama did not say anything about that, the author then goes on to give examples of places which do have internet censorship, to support his claim, but does not say whether the censorship has been a good thing for these countries. Therefore the reasoning is stronger in document 3 than in document 1.

Example Level 1 answer

I don't think document 1 or 3 are particularly strong. Document 3 is merely a rant with no structure, clear strands of reasoning or a real conclusion. David Aaronovitch moves from one idea to the next, telling stories and antidotes without much consistency. He talks about how the reader can't trust information they find online and that it needs to be improved but there's no real argument. Even though doc 1 isn't much better, its easy to follow, has a conclusion and an attempt at reasoning with evidence and examples to support him.

Develop Your Own Reasoning

4 To what extent should the internet be regulated?

Write your own argument to answer this question. You should use your own ideas and you may use ideas/evidence from the resource booklet to help you. [20]

Level 4 16 - 20	<p>Answers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer the question which was asked with some precision and subtlety. give generally strong support to this answer (their conclusion) using reasons and intermediate conclusions (although there may be some weaker parts to the argument). <p>Answers may include some of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accomplished argument structure using strands of reasoning. questioning of key terms, such as <i>extent</i>, <i>internet</i>, <i>regulated</i>; this questioning if present informs the argument, possibly qualifying the conclusion. subtle thinking about the issue/relevant own ideas or examples about the issue/thoughtful use of ideas from resource booklet. anticipation of key counter arguments and effective response to these. <p>The argument is written in clear, precise prose in language capable of dealing with complexity.</p>
Level 3 11 - 15	<p>Answers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer the question which was asked. give support to this answer (their conclusion) using reasons and intermediate conclusions (although there may be some irrelevance or reliance on dubious assumptions). <p>Answers may include some of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear argument structure, which may be simple and precise or attempt complexity with only some success. an attempt to question or define terms such as <i>regulated</i> and possibly an attempt to use this questioning or definition in the argument. clear (if perhaps one dimensional) thinking about the issue/own ideas or examples about the issue/reasonable use of ideas from the resource booklet. anticipation of relevant counter arguments and some response to these. <p>The argument is written in prose in language which is clear and developing complexity.</p>
Level 2 6 - 10	<p>Answers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer the general thrust of the question which was asked, possibly in an overstated or vague way. give some support to this answer (their conclusion) using examples and reasons (although there may be considerable irrelevance and/or reliance on dubious assumptions). <p>Answers may include some of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> either clear, straightforward, possibly simplistic arguments, or a discourse at length with a focus on the ideas and content but only basic structure of reasoning. an attempt to define some terms, but this definition is used ineffectively if at all. some thinking/own ideas about the issue/inclusion of ideas from the resource booklet. inclusion of a counter argument or counter reason but any response to this is ineffective, possibly merely dismissive. <p>The argument may be written as annotated bullet points rather than in coherent prose. The language may be either simple and clear or overly flowing, with little attention to meaning and precision.</p>
Level 1 1 - 5	<p>Answers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt to answer the general thrust of the question there may be no stated conclusion. attempt to support this answer, possibly using examples in place of reasoning (and there is likely to be considerable overstatement and reliance on very dubious assumptions). <p>Answers may include some of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> disjointed, incoherent reasoning with little structure, possibly a discourse or rant on the theme. rhetorical questions and emotive language. 'reasons' and 'intermediate conclusions' presented with no logical connection. ideas which tend to be contradictory, asserted or derived largely from the stimulus material. <p>The argument may be written as annotated bullet points rather than in coherent prose. Language is used in a vague, imprecise way.</p>
0	No creditworthy material.

Example Level 4 part answer

I believe that China and South Korea have gone too far in terms of internet censorship. People should have a right to state their opinion, even if they express a different political belief to the government.

It is argued that this sort of freedom will bring about social unrest. For instance, in the past week, Egyptian protestors have used the internet to organise huge rallies in opposition to their president and his government.

But I believe that this is a good thing, the people should have a say in the way their lives are governed and feel that their voices count. The internet is a fantastic way for people who would find it difficult otherwise to have their voices heard. This should not be taken away, as a matter of principle and because according to the United Nations it is a right...

Governments should definitely not regulate the internet as there would then be a risk, as in China, that a political agenda could hold sway over what is regulated. However, it might be beneficial if there was an international organisation dedicated solely to detecting and tracing criminal activity of the most serious sort, eg murder for snuff films, child pornography etc. There should be freedom of speech but criminals should not benefit from their actions...

In conclusion, the internet should only be regulated when people step outside the law. Freedom of speech should not be restricted and governments should not get too heavily involved. Instead a politically neutral international organisation should intervene on only the rarest of occasions.

Example Level 3 part answer

The internet should not be heavily regulated. However, it should not be left totally uncensored.

The line that you must take with regulating the net is that sites and/or people posting online should only be regulated if either the content posted is a very serious illegal act such as child pornography or if the material is dangerous and inciting hatred as these are very serious crimes. For example, a website promoting racism and people to take out various forms of discrimination on certain groups of people.

Regulations should not exist for anything else, as people have the rights to freedom of expression and should be able to exercise that, so long as it is within the boundaries of acceptable behaviour...

Also the government should not be the ones to regulate the net, as they may use it to silence and censor their opposition. People need information from both sides of the political spectrum to decide for themselves what they believe is right...

Example Level 2 part answer

The internet should only be partly regulated.

Many people use the internet to get away from real-life, but if the internet was fully regulated and they had to enter all their details and everybody knew who they really were, they would not be able to do this.

Acts which are criminal in everyday life, however, should be regulated online. Fraud, for example, happens a lot more on the internet, if this wasn't regulated, otherwise criminals will get away with it and steal more people's money.

Social networking sites should also be regulated, as many children and young teenagers use them and are very susceptible to so-called 'online predators'.

Even so, the regulation should not go so far as to block content of certain websites. Everybody has different opinions ... if people don't like them they shouldn't go there.

Example Level 1 part answer

The internet is the greatest tool man has witnessed. Put away your hammer and get out your mouse and keyboard. The internet helps with everything from finding your long lost ancestors to discovering the perfect recipe of a Numibian meal. However, some people have taken advantage of this and this has led to speculation of what once was our greatest aid...

Terrorist sites and pornography sites are trouble and chaos corners. Sites such as these should be censored because they bring about unrest for the community. These days even terrorists know how to send videos onto the internet, it makes me feel embarrassed because I haven't the slightest clue how. Anyway, due to this its becoming increasingly easy for people to access these videos and react in whatever way they want, it gives them choice, this is not a choice we want to give to young people. However, in terms of pornography, even though it brings in a lot of revenue, the extent to which it has led today is horrendous. I'm talking about child pornography in a sense, the internet allows us to trace the culprit, but I stop to think and ask, why on earth is it there in the first place?...

However, people such as Paul Rassinier getting applause for being a holocaust denier is just unforgivable. The internet has given too much freedom, because it allows people to anonymously write blog or Wikipedia entries. I think we should find that person who wrote it and lock him up and throw away the key even if he wasn't physically involved in the mass genocide of 6 million Jews he's just as guilty. I guess he's not aware that the 'agentic state' does not really exist anymore.

Just like TV watersheds, we should endorse a watershed for internet so that not every child turns out in the future to be a porn obsessed, Nazi promoting terrorist.

Therefore I strongly agree that there should be strong regulation of the internet for the welfare and safety of the world and everything it contains.

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