The Internet & How to Control It
INFO 100

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software

a variety of packages: CyberPatrol, NetNanny, SafeSurf, Surf Watch, AOL, MSN parental controls
using a variety of techniques: keyword match, white lists, black lists
rating systems: PICS (Platform for Internet Content Selection) RSACi (older)

blocking what?
pornography, sexually explicit materials
prohibition of chat, IM
but also
things you disagree with (hate speech, evolution, sexuality, drugs etc etc etc)?

technological issues & problems

ambiguity of language
image files
dynamism of the web
legal attempts
Communications Decency Act of 1996, criminalized Internet transmission of "indecent" material to minors, overturned 1997 *Reno v. ACLU* Internet as "unique and wholly new medium of human communication" deserving of highest level of free speech protection
Child Online Protection Act 1998, commercial distribution of material "harmful to minors", stayed from enforcement by decisions in *Ashcroft v. ACLU*

legal attempts
Child Internet Protection Act 1999, public libraries and school receiving e-rate funds must install filters on all public computers to block obscenity, child pornography, materials harmful to minors, could be disabled for "bona fide research purposes"
*Multnomah County Public Library v. United States* circuit court ruling unanimously that it would restrict substantial amounts of protected speech "whose suppression serves no legitimate government interest."

what you can’t restrict
vagueness
overbreadth
prior restraint
content (narrowly tailored, compelling gov’t interest, no less restrictive alternative)

what you can restrict
obscenity ("community standards"
fighting words
community standards
incitement/clear and present danger
libel & slander

cf. China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Singapore, etc.
the newest idea

.kids.us
“kid friendly” sites, validated by an advisory board reporting to a federal (private) contractor
“lack serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for minors”
no IM/chat
no distinction between children & teens
no sense of standards, points of view

the overall questions

who gets to decide who sees what?
government?
parents?
individuals?
where? (schools, libraries, offices)
on what basis?
for what purposes?
using what technological means?