

Offensive content is defined as any content that makes a user feel uncomfortable or upset. The internet is full of such content. There are a number of forms it can take, but either way it is widespread and difficult to control.

Following are some items that are considered offensive content on the internet:

- Footage of real or simulated violence, criminal activity or accidents from video clips, games or films. Almost any depiction of graphic or disturbing violence on the internet can fall into this category. This type of content can be subjective. Everyone has different levels of what they consider to be offensive, and that is true of this type of content.
- Sexually explicit content. A specific form of this content is revenge porn. Revenge porn is the dissemination of topless or nude photos of someone without their consent in an attempt to intentionally hurt or harass that person.
- Images of child sexual abuse
- Content that advocates the doing of a terrorist act
- Content instructing or promoting crime or violence.

Some offensive content is discriminatory. This type of content takes several forms. Discrimination can be religious, racial, ethnic, based on sexual orientation, or even based on gender. Regardless of the specific kind of discrimination, these types of blogs, posts, videos, etc are hurtful and in many cases dangerous.

Children and young people may not deliberately seek out inappropriate content. They may inadvertently access content while undertaking online searches, they may seek it out, or be referred to it by others.

Young people with smartphones might also be able to discover content that may be blocked by home and school internet filters. Offensive or illegal content can expose children to concepts that they are not ready to manage and that may breach social and cultural norms. Some content can be distressing for children. They may not report it to parents or teachers as they may be ashamed of what they have seen, particularly if they sought it out.

Another form of offensive online content is threat. Some research suggests that, on average, 65% of internet users have experienced some kind of an online threat. Most common types of threat include unwanted messengers from strangers, false messages, offensive communication, unwanted sexual messages, or deliberate provocation.

The concept of offensive content is controversial. Not only is an understanding of offensive content complicated by differences between individuals and societies about what content is offensive, there is also a problem concerning the regulation, and perhaps censorship, of content on the internet.

The scale of globalization further complicates the discussion around content moderation and censorship. Users in the United States have a First Amendment-based right to freedom of speech, but users in China don't have that same right.

Internet censorship is the ability to restrict specific websites or online content from being viewed. It may come in the form of an edit, regulation, or law issued by the government. It could also occur privately if an ISP objects to the content that certain individuals wish to view.

The advantage of allowing internet censorship is that content which is violent, obscene, or dangerous can be immediately blocked. This protects children from inadvertently viewing content that could be scary or harmful to them, such as the murder and decapitation videos which have made their way to sites like Facebook and Twitter in recent years.

It could lessen the incidence and impact of identity theft by restricting the circulation of malware. It could help protect national security. It could stop circulation of fake news.

The disadvantage is obvious: internet censorship is a restriction on a person's ability to view the content they wish to see, when they wish to see it. It raises certain difficult questions.

Who sets the standards for censorship? What information should be let through? How much will the censorship mechanism cost? What impact will internet censorship have on the national economy? Who will be responsible for the censorship? What are the implications for Americans' First Amendment right to freedom of expression? What happens to the level of knowledge (or ignorance) in society if information is censored? What will be the effects of censorship on entrepreneurship in society?