

**OSCE Meeting on the Relationship Between Racist, Xenophobic
and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes**

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**Public and Private Partnership in the Fight Against Racism,
Xenophobia and Anti-Semitism on the Internet — Best Practices
(Session 3)**

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I would like to thank the French delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, for taking the lead in the organizing of this meeting on “*The Relationship Between Racism, Xenophobic and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes*”. As well, I wish to applaud the active encouragement and the assistance of the Bulgarian delegation as Chair of the OSCE in acknowledging the importance the Internet plays in the transmission of hatred across the world, and within the OSCE region.

The issue we are gathering to discuss in this session is what can we do, in a practical sense to work together across borders and boundaries and come together to combat hate on the Internet? We need to examine the appropriate roles of governmental agencies, international organizations, NGOs, religious associations and industry groups – and determine the degree to which, and the ways we can work together and learn from one another.

The Anti-Defamation League was founded in 1913, and our founding charter states, "*The immediate object of the League is to stop, by appeals to reason and conscience and, if necessary, by appeals to law, the defamation of the Jewish people. Its ultimate purpose is to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike and to put an end forever to unjust and unfair discrimination against and ridicule of any sect or body of citizens.*"

As the years have gone by, new technologies and new means of communicating defamation and hatreds have arisen, and ADL has been in the forefront of collecting, tracking, archiving and understanding anti-Semitism, racism, bigotry and hatred wherever it occurs.

When the Internet first emerged, finding materials on the relatively small playing field was not difficult because there were relatively few places to go. There are now billions of pages online and a seemingly infinite amount of data is now available. The rise of new communications technologies –

particularly the Internet - has had a tremendous impact on everyday life across the world. However, concerns about online extremism are not new.

In January 1985, the Anti-Defamation League released a report entitled *Computerized Networks of Hate*. Years before the Internet became a household word, that report exposed a computerized bulletin board created by and for white supremacists and accessible to anyone with a modem and a home computer.

This bulletin board was a forerunner of extremism on the Internet. *Computerized Networks of Hate* detailed five ways the "Aryan Nation Liberty Net" served the white supremacist movement, all of which remain important to extremism on the Internet today. First, the bulletin board was designed to draw young people to the hate movement with appealing propaganda. Second, the network helped stir up hatred against the "enemies" of white supremacy. Third, the bulletin board was a means to make money. Fourth, the system offered the potential for circulating messages among extremists, and finally, it bypassed embargoes that nations outside of the United States placed on hate literature.

The *Computerized Networks of Hate* report warned that "complacency" about this development "would be unwise," because it represented a new field for hatred. At the time, Louis Beam, one of the creators of the bulletin board, boasted that "computers are now bringing their power and capabilities" to the white supremacist movement. "The possibilities," Beam remarked, "have only been touched upon."



ADL has continued to monitor how the electronic medium is used by extremists and terrorists, and in my role as the Director of the Anti-Defamation League's Internet Monitoring Unit I work with a group of dedicated full-time researchers who are focused solely on the Internet. Our Internet Monitoring Unit works in conjunction with our general researchers and our various field offices to coordinate monitoring of hateful materials on the Internet. We work within our Civil Rights division to analyze and determine trends and important information, and to produce materials to educate on these important issues. This coordination of our online efforts ensures that we cover as much of the Internet as possible.

The coordination of information, whether it is in a larger agency – such as ADL – or a small group, is essential to dealing with hate online effectively. Any organization dealing with hate online must make sure the information gathered is analyzed, shared and the results disseminated. ADL regularly publishes information about extremist use of the Internet, and develops new materials to educate about hate online. These are printed and distributed, and also put online – so that anyone can download and print these out themselves. This distribution ensures that we reach our audience and let people know about hate online, and is critical to the success of our programs.

One example of how ADL partnered with the US government in this important education effort about on hate online is through the Partners Against Hate program, one of our flagship programs dedicated to youth violence prevention. Online hate is such an important component of our programs aimed at children that Partners Against Hate has created two documents, available at this conference – *Investigating Hate Crimes on the*



Internet (a technical assistance brief for law enforcement) and *Hate on the Internet: A Response Guide for Educators and Families* (that teaches parents and educators about how to respond to hate online and deal with children on this issue).

Partners Against Hate represents a joint effort by the Anti-Defamation League, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, and the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence to design and implement a program of outreach, public education, and training to address youth-initiated hate violence. Funded by a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Partners Against Hate features an innovative collection of both on- and offline resources and support to a variety of audiences, including parents, educators, law enforcement officials and the community at large.

The Anti-Defamation League trains police agencies across the United States on all aspects of extremism and terrorism, including how these groups use the Internet. ADL has been taking police groups to the Holocaust Museum for years to teach them about persecution and the importance of understanding how hatred can manifest itself. This ongoing and continuous program of working with law enforcement is an excellent means of ensuring that best practices are shared with those agencies that may be called upon to deal directly with the results of hate crimes online, or those crimes that may be inspired by online materials. ADL shares information on a section of our website dedicated to law enforcement by placing our in-depth reports, such as “Extremism in America,” online and by posting breaking stories of

interest to law enforcement. Agencies that need to know about hate online should be trained on identification, recognition and the ways to handle these online problems, and this partnership is an important way government and non-government agencies can work together.

In the United States, unless a web site includes clearly illegal materials – and there are court cases that have determined what levels of threats and/or incitement are considered acceptable – ADL does not believe that there should be a curtailing of freedom of speech online. The ADL also believes that Internet providers and hosts of web sites should uphold the terms of their “Terms of Service” and “Acceptable Use Policies” agreements that often include prohibitions against hateful materials being posted by their customers. Companies have the right to choose with whom they do business and if their rules preclude their hosting hate, then providers and hosts - when informed these materials are on their servers - should act to ensure compliance with their rules.

Many providers do an excellent job fighting hate online, and many companies’ “Terms of Service” and “Acceptable Use Policies” clearly state they will not tolerate hate being posted on or sent through their service. ADL has worked on many occasions with providers to report and to assess hate sites they may be hosting. When sites cross the line and are clearly violating the posted rules, ADL contacts providers to ask that they enforce their rules and remove the hate sites.

One example of this synergy between ADL and the industry was the “Hoozajew.com” website, that included a downloadable program where a

person could enter a name and supposedly find how likely it was that the name was “Jewish”. ADL’s concerns about the program included the fact that the site it was posted on was clearly anti-Semitic, and the program database included personal identifiable information on individuals. After the hosting company was contacted, they chose to enforce their rules and remove the site. The ADL believes that the model of working with a company by sharing information with them about how a site may be violating the rules of service, and asking them to consider taking action is one effective way to ensure industry self-regulation is effective.

ADL has developed strong ties with many companies in the Internet industry as we have worked to fight anti-Semitism online. Another way we work to do this is by debunking anti-Semitic Internet rumors. ADL’s website includes an entire section dedicated to addressing Internet rumors – and in many cases companies have linked directly to our site to effectively quash anti-Semitic rumors.

One recent example was the anti-Semitic site that was appearing as the first return when people searched the word “Jew” on Google. ADL received messages that indicated people were claiming Google had chosen to make this anti-Semitic site the top result, and ADL was able to quickly respond and post materials in the “Internet Rumors” section of our website that this was due to Google’s algorithm, and not a conscious choice by the company. Google has responded to this situation by placing a prominent notice on the results page for the search to explain their system of ranking and why this hateful site appeared in their search – and they linked directly to the “Internet Rumors” section of the ADL site. The identification of

information online, and responding to it quickly by getting the word out through press releases and an organizations' web site is another important aspect of combating hate that those working together to fight hate online should consider.

ADL is also involved in international cooperation and coordination in the fight against hatred through our membership in the International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH). INACH unites a group of agencies that monitor and combat hatred on the Internet, with six members that have fully operational bureaus: the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and the United States – and an associated partner in the United Kingdom. Candidate members are starting bureaus in Poland, France, Denmark, and Sweden. The groups involved in INACH include NGOs and government agencies working together to share information and expertise, and to develop effective ways to share best practices. Also, INACH works to share information so we can educate the public at large and also specifically children/teens in schools.

INACH members have had success in dealing with hate online by identifying sites, one example being the “sluitjeaan” site - a “jihad” recruitment site with anti-Semitic material on it. This example of the power of international cooperation within the network was demonstrated when INACH members worked together on this issue. The sluitjeaan (“join us”) site was created and maintained from the Netherlands; the main site was hosted in India, and the site had 5 mirror sites in the USA and elsewhere. The combined efforts of the Dutch complaints bureau, the German government bureau Jugendschutz.net and ADL made it possible to have the

site and all its mirrors removed within 2 weeks because the materials were determined to be in violation of the rules of the companies that provided them hosting.

Overall, the ADL believes that the best ways to deal with hate online are through collaboration and cooperation – either internally within an agency, between an agency and companies, or through agency-to-agency contacts. The model of self-regulation in the United States has meant that companies that have clear rules against hate can make a decision to not do business with people who violate those rules, and by working with Internet companies, agencies of all kinds – governmental and non-profits - can have great success in fighting hate online.

The most important aspect of fighting hate is through education, so that when confronted by hate online, people will know where and to whom they should turn. Working to expose hatred and to educate the public is the best of all “best practices” any group can hope to establish.

Therefore, I call on those meeting here to consider the following:

- There should be better international cooperation and coordination by those NGOs and other private organizations monitoring the use of the Internet for hateful and terroristic purposes. The Anti-Defamation League, through our partnership with the International Network Against Cyber Hate has shown a practical model on how international cooperation between non-governmental groups in the United States and the

rest of the world can work together on common issues and have real results. The creation of a central database with input from participating entities, and a centralized portal that would facilitate the reporting of cross-border complaints (and can route the complaint to the appropriate country to deal with) should be implemented.

- Internet providers and hosts should consider voluntarily adopting language the industry has already developed in their “Terms of Service” and “Acceptable Use Policies” that includes agreed-upon definitions and/or broad rules on what types of materials they will not host. Many US-based companies have exemplary models that could be followed to encourage this industry-based self-regulation. I want to emphasize, however, that any such efforts to promote self-regulation should be truly voluntary; any sort of government involvement in any self-regulation effort, no matter how benign such involvement might seem, cannot avoid raising questions about possible coercion.

- The information shared between monitoring groups should be analyzed and reported on regularly, with particular attention paid to how individuals, especially children, are being exposed to hate sites and content, and the ways in which such content affects that audience. The information should be used to develop education at all levels to help parents and educators recognize hate sites on the Internet, and to teach these lessons to



children. This information should be made widely available, and posted on the Internet so it can be shared freely.

I thank you for your time.