

Proposed Declaration of the Rights of Netizens

We Netizens have begun to put together a Declaration of the Rights of Netizens and are requesting from other Netizens contributions, ideas, and suggestions of what rights should be included. Following are some beginning ideas.

The Declaration of the Rights of Netizens:

In recognition that the net represents a revolution in human communications that was built by a cooperative non-commercial process, the following Declaration of the Rights of the Netizen is presented for Netizen comment.

As Netizens are those who take responsibility and care for the Net, the following are proposed to be their rights:

- o Universal access at no or low cost
- o Freedom of Electronic Expression to promote the exchange of knowledge without fear of reprisal
- o Uncensored Expression
- o Access to Broad Distribution
- o Universal and Equal access to knowledge and information
- o Consideration of one's ideas on their merits
- o No limitation to access to read, to post and to otherwise contribute
- o Equal quality of connection
- o Equal time of connection
- o No Official Spokesperson
- o Uphold the public grassroots purpose and participation
- o Volunteer Contribution - no personal profit from the contribution freely given by others
- o Protection of the public purpose from those who would use it for their private and money making purposes

The Net is not a Service, it is a Right. It is only valuable when it is collective and universal. Volunteer effort protects the intellectual and technological common-wealth that is being created. DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE NET and NETIZENS.

Inspiration from: RFC 3 (1969), Thomas Paine, Declaration of Independence (1776), Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), NSF Acceptable Use Policy, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the current cry for democracy worldwide.

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This article is a draft chapter from Michael Hauben
<hauben@columbia.edu> and Ronda Hauben's <rh120@columbia.edu> Netbook
titled "The Netizens and the Wonderful World of the Net." Commercial
use of this writing is prohibited and this draft is being made
available for comment. Please send comments to both of us at
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