

Craigslist Censoring begs the Question :: Is the Internet the last great Bastion of Free Speech?

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Craigslist Censoring begs the Question :: Is the Internet the last great Bastion of Free Speech?

By Rob Sullivan

There is yet another debate raging over whether the Internet should truly allow unfettered free speech.

This debate is over Craigslist and whether it should be more proactive in censoring those who post on it.

The debate began when listings for apartments were posted that were obviously racially slanted. In this article I look at the issue and ask the question: Should the Internet be censored?

Free speech is one of the building blocks of any democratic society. Without free speech we, as citizens of the democratic society, would be subject to many forms of chastisement including personal attacks and even legal ramifications.

This is why I for one like the Internet. You see, to me the Internet is one of the last great representations of true free speech. We are allowed to post as we see fit whether it is a comment in a forum or a blog post which gets syndicated around the world.

In fact, many sites have made their livings from allowing the general public to freely post their viewpoints, both positive and negative.

Apartmentratings.com has been sued before by angry landlords or building owners. This is a site which allows renters of apartments all over the US to post comments and ratings about the buildings they live in. Of course, many people are generally happy with their apartments but some are not, and aren't afraid to let the world know.

It is these negative posts which have gotten the site in trouble in the past even though the website's terms and conditions clearly state that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the website owners.

Craigslist Censoring begs the Question :: Is the Internet the last great Bastion of Free Speech?

Now, I've talked to the owner of this site before and I don't think he should be held responsible for posts made on his site. In fact, I don't think it's his responsibility to have to censor those who post there either.

I believe the only responsibility this site has to the apartment buildings in question would be to supply information of a technical nature to them if they have the legal documentation to support their request.

In other words, his only responsibility should be to supply IP addresses of those who have posted the offending remarks, and then let the apartment owner try and track down the anonymous posters. It really has nothing to do with the site in question.

The reason I'm bringing this up is because another well known site is currently being sued for a similar situation.

CraigsList.org is now the subject of a legal battle because of posts made to their website.

Apparently, someone posted an ad for an apartment rental and explicitly asked that certain minorities not apply because, according to the person who posted the ad, these people "tend to clash with me so that won't work out."

Now, here's the issue for me: Sure the guy's post stated that there were certain races that he did not want to apply, but it's not like he said "I hate you all!" Instead, he said that these people tended to clash with him. This isn't necessarily a racist comment, he's just stating his opinion based on his previous experience. In my mind, that doesn't necessarily make him a racist.

What really bugs me is that Craigslist is now being held accountable for this person's post.

Sure it may not have been in the best of taste, but have you seen some of the other postings on Craigslist? There are many other posts which, while they aren't similar to this one, are of equally poor taste in my opinion. Yet they are allowed to continue to be hosted on Craigslist.

You see, to me there are so many issues at play in this one simple post. Just consider the racism issue for a second. Who determines that it is racist? And how does one know if a post is indeed racist?

Let's look at the apartment ratings site for a second. If I was to post there about an apartment complex that housed primarily white people and that was "ok by me," would I then be considered a racist? If so, why would you consider me a racist? Because I said that it was ok that mostly white people lived there? Does that make me a racist or the apartment owner/manager for renting mostly to white people? Perhaps it is a community that has a small ethnic population - does that mean that the town's fathers are racist because they are not allowing different ethnicities to reside there?

When does the racist card stop being played?

Craigslist Censoring begs the Question :: Is the Internet the last great Bastion of Free Speech?

Racism aside, why should Craigslist have to censor its postings? Is there some acceptability threshold? Some common denominator that says your post is OK but mine isn't? This then leads to the larger issue of who decides what is "common decency?"

If the community as a whole should decide what is acceptable, why is it then up to the private business (in this case Craigslist) to enforce that "common decency" protocol?

Because this is a privately run, for-profit business it should be up to them to decide how to run their business. I don't think Google actively filters racist sites from its search results, so why aren't they being sued because that content is also freely and easily accessible through a Google search?

In the end, I think if you are a believer in true freedom of speech with no strings attached, you must support sites like Craigslist and Apartmentratings. Because if you don't, you never know where the government or lawyers will stop.

Before you know it our Internet could be as heavily censored as China's. And then where will democracy live?

Rob Sullivan is a SEO Consultant and Writer for

Textlinkbrokers.com

. Textlinkbrokers is the trusted

leader in building long term rankings through safe and effective

link building

. Please provide a link

directly to Textlinkbrokers when syndicating this article.

Marketing On Craigslist 101

By Shanon Lewis

Since its launch in 1995 Craigslist.org has quietly become the largest online classifieds website in the world with a regional presence in 190 cities, across 35 countries. Each month over 10 million people log on to the seventh most popular website to buy and sell just about everything. From real estate to furniture, promoting services such as contracting, house cleaning and even babysitting - Craigslist is the one spot where anyone can connect regionally to fill a need.

As its popularity has continued to increase, so have the possibilities for vendors large and small to market their wares on Craigslist. What's the big attraction? For the most part Craigslist is 100% free to

Craigslist Censoring begs the Question :: Is the Internet the last great Bastion of Free Speech?

post and search. Only do job postings in San Francisco, L.A and New York City cost a small fee to post. Otherwise, Craigslist is an open free source for new targeted customers, ripe for the picking, just waiting for your business to give them what they want.

Craigslist is regionally based website that truly promotes community involvement. However, you can post in any of the available metros and multiple metros as well. The trick is in designing an ad that gets people attention, getting on a regular posting schedule, following the rules (or at least not overtly breaking them) and searching for new customers daily.

Simplicity in ad design is paramount and it matches the vibe that Craigslist likes to attract - peer-to-peer, real human interaction. It lacks the commercial aspects that add fluff and confusion in exchange for simple ads, most posted by real folks. Design your ad to fit into that scheme is key to a successful campaign.

Get into the habit of posting often on Craigslist and hit multiple metros with different ads to get more reach (if your business can support it). It's free to post so what do you have to lose!

Understanding Craigslist rules are fairly simple as they are openly published. They are super picky about what you can post, but there are exceptions like livestock and anything illegal (drugs, guns, etc.). One of the major rules that I see as a marketing rule more than a terms of service rule is to post in the category that best corresponds with your product type. This ensures your ad will reach the best target without adding to useless clutter.

Over 8 million people post monthly on Craigslist and that number grows every day. Don't just sit back and post ads, answer ads seeking your products and services as well.

Craigslist is one of the best ways for every business, large and small to find a new voice online for little more than elbow grease.

Shanon Lewis is a web marketing expert and the author of "The Unofficial Craigslist Book" the first and only book that features detailed tips, tricks and guidance showing every business how to succeed on

<http://Craigslist.org>

. For more information, visit

<http://www.craigslist-book.com>

.



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!