Censorship

A video with focus on Internet Censorship

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Group 8
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Abstract

Censorship has always been an issue at the forefront of societal dynamics, the advent of the internet has only furthered its importance in current affairs. Censorship is used in order to prevent users from accessing obscenities and private data, but arguably inhibits personal freedom. It is a very subjective concept as many disagree on what can be censored on a moral and ethical level.

This poster, and its video resource, aims to demonstrate the significance of internet censorship on a global scale through analysing reasons for censorship, censorship methods, and past examples

Introduction

The term 'Censorship' refers to the control of information and ideas that are circulated within society preventing the viewing of distressing and extremist opinions, images, website and content.
Whilst the motivations of censoring information range from the good intentions of protecting children from unsuitable content or to governments attempts to keeping intelligence confidential, all reasons lead to the same result of blocking access to undesirable information.

As the new 'Information Highway' the internet acts as the most common gateway for accessing information making the censorship of inappropriate content essential. Organisations such as the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) work alongside ISPs, mobile operators, software provider and the police to minimise the availability of online criminal content.
An educational Video resource has been created to communicate the common issues of internet censorship in a manner which engages the audience

Background

Censorship has been present throughout history. The control of information is of high importance for many organisations throughout the world. Many parallels can be drawn between censorship in past centuries and censorship today.
In the 16th century Galileo was put under house arrest by the Catholic Church for his radical scientific theories, whereas today Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiaobo is imprisoned by the Chinese government for promoting democratic reform.
Sometimes information is censored in order to protect individuals from offensive material. An example of this would be ISPs using filtering programs in order to prevent users from viewing child pornography. On the other hand, censorship inhibits freedoms of individuals. While some countries may put less emphasis on personal freedoms (China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia), many countries with personal freedoms at a core of their governing ideology (USA and UK) are preventing individuals from speaking their mind.
In the UK Paul Chambers was fined 2,000 pounds for "tweeting" a joke about blowing up an airport after it closed down due to heavy snow.

Discussion

The group started by mind mapping ideas on the topic of censorship to come to a consensus on which areas were to be focused on. It was then decided to split up the task of research to individuals with two members each focusing more on the poster design and video script and editing. Most of the research undertaken was internet based, particularly news websites, to find topical stories of censorship within organisations and throughout the world.
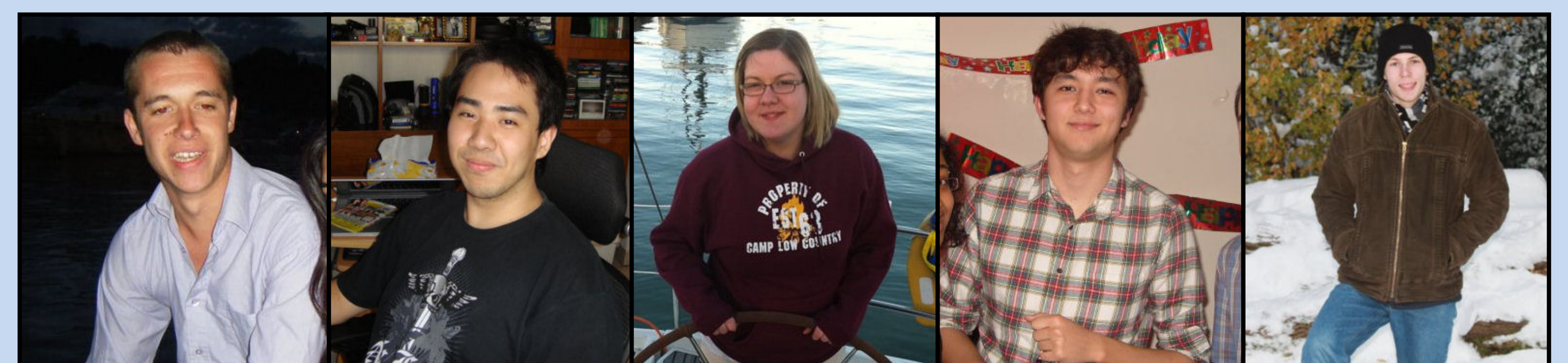
Method

We made a video to catch the attention of the audience in a more entertaining way whilst providing educational information on the topic of censorship. Humour was used to make the content more accessible and entertaining.

Conclusion

The Internet allows for easy communication of information worldwide which may be deemed unsuitable by certain groups. Many individuals, companies and countries censor otherwise available information online for a variety of reasons in a number of different ways. The use of censorship is one that will always be met with criticism from various parties. However sometimes it is clearly necessary, such as for protecting children from paedophilia and other illegal obscenities.

A balance between restricting human rights and protecting people from unacceptable material needs to be found however, this is hard to find since opinions differentiate depending on the individual involved.
We believe our resource is effective since it is structured to convey the important themes of censorship in an informative and educational manner whilst being humorous and engaging. We could have enhanced the video by asking more detailed questions but the aim was to engage an audience as wide as possible rather than just involving those with a prior knowledge of online censorship.

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Video Resource: http://www.edshare.soton.ac.uk/6313

Keywords

China

IWF

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Child Protection

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Wikileaks

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