

## **SUBMISSION No. 103**

I wish to make a succinct comment about the proposed mandatory “internet filtering”.

First, I regard the term “filter” as a form of propaganda. I will only use the term because it is being used a lot in these discussions.

Second, I am not sure what the government is hoping to achieve in this policy. So, I will hypothesise. If they are trying to stop deliberate access to websites then that will not work. Here are four freely available technologies that will circumvent any filter:

TOR

JAP

I2P

hotspotshield

That is just a small sample. It is also not counting paid for methods of circumvention, such as a VPN – a commonly used business tool.

If the government is trying to stop accidental access to websites then this is a moot point. I have been using the internet since 2000. I have never accidentally stumbled upon any material that is objectionable to a reasonable person.

Third, this proposal is, in my opinion, the biggest threat to civil liberties since the Australia card. Why? It is based upon a secret blacklist immune to even FOI requests. This blacklist has already made grievous blunders; I refer to the blacklist being leaked twice to reveal an astrologer, a dentist and a kennel operator all being on it – all innocent and unknowing victims who were shocked to find out. Scope creep is also inevitable. Senator Conroy has mooted the inclusion of sites on anorexia. There's also a group of religious zealots called the Australian Christian Lobby who want to ban the whole sex industry. They will push aggressively for their God-bothering agenda.

Any “filtering” should be done at the PC level. In fact many ISPs already offer such a service. That way people make their own choices; people do not have this imposition forced upon them. The money wasted on this misguided scheme should be put into the AFP to get to the root of the problem. In particular I remind everyone that this year in a senate committee hearing there were extraordinary claims that paedophiles in the 1990s had brought their victims through Australian airports. Education should also be a broad aim. The internet is like a street. You educate people about street-safety. You don't put a huge tarpaulin along the street, turn a blind eye to the crimes on it, and give people a false sense of security about what's happening. But that is what the policy of internet “filtering” does.

I implore everyone reading this to see the utter folly of this misguided policy.

Yours sincerely