

A Declaration

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A Declaration

A Declaration of the _____
Proper Noun of Cyberspace

BY JOHN PERRY BARLOW

Governments of the _____
Pronoun World, you _____
Noun giants of flesh and _____
Verb - Non 3rd Person

Singular Present, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of _____
Noun. On behalf of the future, I ask you of
the past to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You have no sovereignty where we gather.

We have no elected government, nor are we likely to have one, so I address you with no greater authority than
that with which _____
Noun itself always speaks. I declare the global social space we are building to be
naturally independent of the tyrannies you seek to impose on us. You have no _____
Noun right to rule us nor
do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to _____
Verb - Base Form.

Governments derive their just powers from the _____
Verb - Base Form of the governed. You have neither

Verb - Past Participle nor _____
Verb - Past Participle ours. We did not _____
Verb you. You do not

Verb us, nor do you _____
Verb our world. Cyberspace does not lie within your borders. Do not
think that you can build it, as though it were a public _____
Noun project. You _____
Modal. It is an act of

Noun and it grows itself through our _____
Adjective _____
Noun - Plural.

You

have not engaged in our great and _____ Coordinating conjunction _____ Coordinating conjunction, nor did you create the wealth of our marketplaces. You do not know our culture, our _____ Noun - Plural, or the _____ Adjective codes that already _____ Verb - Non 3rd Person Singular Present our society more _____ Noun than could be obtained by any of your impositions.

You _____ Verb - Non 3rd Person Singular Present there are problems among us that you need to solve. You use this _____ Noun as an excuse to invade our precincts. Many of these problems don't exist. Where there are real conflicts, where there are wrongs, we will identify them and address them by our means. We are _____ Verb - _____ Present Tense our own Social Contract. This governance will _____ Verb according to the conditions of our world, not yours. Our world is _____ Adjective.

Cyberspace _____ Noun - Plural of _____ Noun - Plural, _____ Coordinating conjunction, and thought itself, _____ Determiner like a standing wave in the web of our communications. Ours is a _____ Noun that is both everywhere and _____ Adverb, but it is not where bodies live.

We are creating a _____ Determiner that all may enter without privilege or prejudice accorded by race, economic power, military force, or station of birth.

We are creating a world where _____ Verb, anywhere may express his or her _____ Adverb, no matter how _____ Preposition or subordinating conjunction,

without fear of _____ Coordinating conjunction coerced into silence or conformity.

Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, _____ Verb, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on matter, and there is no _____ Noun here.

Our identities _____ Noun - Plural no bodies, so, unlike you, we cannot obtain order by physical coercion. We _____ Verb - Non 3rd Person Singular Present that from ethics, _____ Verb - Past Tense self-interest, and the _____ Noun, our governance will emerge. Our identities may be distributed across many of your jurisdictions. The only law that all our constituent cultures would generally _____ Verb is the Golden Rule. We _____ Verb - Non 3rd Person Singular Present we will be able to build our particular solutions on that _____ Noun. But we cannot accept the solutions you are attempting to impose.

In the United States, you have today created a law, the Telecommunications Reform Act, which repudiates your own Constitution and insults the dreams of Jefferson, Washington, Mill, Madison, DeToqueville, and Brandeis. These dreams must now be born anew in us.

You are terrified of your own children, since they are natives in a world where you will always be immigrants. Because you fear them, you entrust your bureaucracies with the parental responsibilities you are too cowardly to confront yourselves. In our world, all the sentiments and expressions of humanity, from the debasing to the angelic,

are parts of a seamless whole, the global conversation of bits. We cannot separate the air that chokes from the air upon which wings beat.

In China, Germany, France, Russia, Singapore, Italy and the United States, you are trying to ward off the virus of liberty by erecting guard posts at the frontiers of Cyberspace. These may keep out the contagion for a small time, but they will not work in a world that will soon be blanketed in bit-bearing media.

Your increasingly obsolete information industries would perpetuate themselves by proposing laws, in America and elsewhere, that claim to own speech itself throughout the world. These laws would declare ideas to be another industrial product, no more noble than pig iron. In our world, whatever the human mind may create can be reproduced and distributed infinitely at no cost. The global conveyance of thought no longer requires your factories to accomplish.

These increasingly hostile and colonial measures place us in the same position as those previous lovers of freedom and self-determination who had to reject the authorities of distant, uninformed powers. We must declare our virtual selves immune to your sovereignty, even as we continue to consent to your rule over our bodies. We will spread ourselves across the Planet so that no one can arrest our thoughts.

We will create a civilization of the Mind in Cyberspace. May it be more humane and fair than the world your governments

have made before.

Davos, Switzerland

February 8, 1996