The loophole that the Daily Jolt has created for its users must be repaired. We may have a right to freedom of speech, but we do not have the right to freedom from responsibility. Jolters need to be held accountable for their remarks. Even with the addition of IP addresses to every post, it still difficult, if not impossible, to identify the individual behind the post. Using IP addresses to locate individuals also poses a problem in terms of privacy rights. Can the College track individuals down, and under what circumstances?

While anonymity is a blessing for some, in that it allows for freer communication, it is a curse in that it allows for post-to-post responsibility for their remarks, giving them license to make reputations on a whim. The loophole that the Daily Jolt has created for its users must be repaired. We may have a right to freedom of speech, but we do not have the right to freedom from responsibility. Jolters need to be held accountable for their actions.

In an ideal world, college students would regulate themselves without requiring the intervention of a high authority. In theory, we all know which posts are appropriate and which aren’t, and we should be able to refrain from impropriety. In practice, however, when freed from identification, we feel as though we can say anything we please and get away with it. When anonymous, we say things we wouldn’t if our names were attached. Perhaps there is a thrill in saying what we know we shouldn’t. As a general rule, however, if we’re making a remark that we don’t want to accept responsibility for, we shouldn’t be making the remark at all.

Since self-regulation on the Jolt has been a stunning failure, it’s time for the forum’s administrator to find another solution. One possibility that has been raised is the elimination of anonymous posting. At the very least, users should be required to register, so that, in the case of unlawful posting, they could be identified and held responsible for their remarks. Certainly, if our names were connected with our posts, self-regulation would become a priority, and I’m sure 90 percent of the problem threads on the forum would disappear.

Students can no longer say whatever they want without worrying about the consequences. I’m sure more than one person will claim that denying users the right to post anonymously is impractical, and understandably so. Students can no longer say whatever they want without worrying about the consequences. Certainly, if our names were connected with our posts, self-regulation would become a priority, and I’m sure 90 percent of the problem threads on the forum would disappear. Making a remark that we don’t want to accept responsibility for, we shouldn’t be making the remark at all.

We do not have to bear abuses of the right to freedom of speech, however. While Jolters should be able to express whatever opinions they choose, we do not have to accept it when they use their posts to slander fellow students. The Jolt has become a place where names are named in connection with serious allegations. If the allegations are true, those involved should suffer the consequences, but the Jolt is not the place to bring criminal accusations in hopes of having the proper punishment meted out. Furthermore, if the allegations have no basis in reality, the poster’s comments qualify as libel, and are unlawful in their own right.

Unfortunately, most of the comments on the Jolt are anonymous, posters are seldom held accountable for their remarks. Even with the addition of IP addresses to every post, it still difficult, if not impossible, to identify the individual behind the post. Using IP addresses to locate individuals also poses a problem in terms of privacy rights. Can the College track individuals down, and under what circumstances?

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