

OPINION

Chat room failures preventable



Tim Olmeda
Opinion Editor

The Internet never ceases to amaze me. No, it's not because of the fact that information about anything is readily available with just a point and click of the mouse. It's the sheer amount of stupidity and lack of responsibility I see that amazes me.

Everyone knows Yahoo!. No doubt, more than a few of you have an email account with them or have used their instant messenger to chat online with your girlfriends or boyfriends or whatnot.

I'm also pretty sure many of you have visited the countless chat rooms on more than one occasion. You have your reasons, I'm sure - morbid curiosity, needing a quick laugh, or some idiotic fantasy of meeting your true love online. I don't care; take your pick and let's move on.

Recently, Yahoo! announced it was going to bar minors from accessing their user-created chat rooms, which were removed following reports some pedophiles were using the rooms for their own perverse desires.

Really? I never would have guessed it possible, especially with rooms titled "8-12 yo girls for older men," and "teen girls for older fat men."

It's sickening enough to imagine some sick pervert was getting his jollies typing dirty messages to what he thought was a child. It's even worse when you realize that this type of thing is always preventable.

Yahoo! should have run a tighter ship, plain and simple. The blame ultimately falls on them for allowing something like this to happen under their supposedly watchful eye - it's just inexcusable.

I understand the idea that user-created rooms are supposed to "enhance the user experience," but honestly, a room advertising sex acts for middle-aged men and elementary school girls is where America should draw the line.

It is admirable that Yahoo! is finally taking responsibility for its dismal failure to protect the youth of America and enforce its own rules and regulations. However, it doesn't excuse the fact that they alone are to blame for allowing innocent children to be taken advantage of and putting them in harm's way.

Hey Yahoo!, I have a tip for you in your future endeavors to repair your faulty chat room system - when a room is labeled "girls 13 and up for much older men," chances are the participants typing away within aren't looking to form a study group with those girls.

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OPINION

Police brutality inexcusable



Marissa Edwards
Editorial Staff

Stress, family loss, dead bodies, no home to go to, unfamiliar faces - these are just a few of the challenges Orleans police are facing in a 12 to 14-hour day in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Where are their reinforcements? What happened to the National Guard that was initially put together to be available in such a situation?

I feel sorry for the officers facing everyday tragedies, but in no way does that justify police brutality.

On October 8, three police officers relieved their stress on Robert Davis, a 64-year old Black man walking down Bourbon Street - those three officers happened to be White by the way.

Numerous headlines in recent newspapers portrayed Black survivors as "looters" and White survivors as "looking for food" after both were seen raiding a grocery store looking for much-needed supplies.

The responsibility has been forced onto the police that they must stop any looter or law-breaker by any means necessary. Problem is, most of those who were seen as violating the law were expected to be Black.

Personally, I don't think this incident would have escalated to the level it did if Davis had been White.

Police reports say that Davis was charged with

being intoxicated, resisting arrest, battery of a police officer, and public intimidation.

Battery of a police officer? How about survival? This man was punched in the back of the head while going out to get a pack of cigarettes. Anyone who gets punched in the back of the head, from my perspective, would not assume it was a cop attacking them, but an assailant. Thus, the fear of being charged with assault would be nonexistent.

What happened to Rodney King? That beating still remains unjustified, as this beating will forever be unjustified. Nothing can justify slamming a man against a wall and punching him on the head several times.

Two of the officers were charged for the beating, and the third officer was charged for the grabbing and shoving an Associated Press Television News producer who helped record the incident. The officers seemed to have forgotten there is a First Amendment and anyone has the right to use it, especially the press.

Obviously, the policemen knew what they were doing was wrong or they would not have pushed the camera away. But, the camera was there and the brutal beating of Davis has been aired all around the nation.

Davis was wrongly treated and will never fully be reimbursed for his suffering, but he will not be forgotten.

MARISSA EDWARDS IS A STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR FOR THE OPINION SECTION OF THE DEL MAR COLLEGE FOGHORN.



Photo Courtesy South Texas Nuclear Power Plant

Corpus Christi receives 25 percent of its electricity from the South Texas Nuclear Power Plant.

EDITORIAL

Nuclear security has dangerous holes

Since Sep. 11, 2001, the United States government has constantly ensured the public that it is doing all it can to ensure the safety of the nation and its citizens.

Recently, however, a group of journalists exposed the failure of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to properly secure many of the nation's nuclear research reactors operating on 25 college campuses across the country.

With investigations now opening into five of the schools for possible breaches in security protocol, the facts coming out are just astounding.

Guards either missing or asleep from their stations,

easy access to high-security areas with no background checks, a large rental truck able to stop unchallenged within 50 feet of a nuclear reactor.

With all the talk today about avoiding and preventing threats to our nation's safety, it is shocking that such lapses in security are even plausible at a facility storing or processing nuclear materials. Four of the five schools under investigation use highly enriched, weapons-grade plutonium to operate their reactors.

The failure highlights just how far the government still has to go to provide this nation with the kind of security that will prevent another Sept. 11. Terrorists are

cunning individuals capable of using everyday objects to inflict unthinkable destruction on those they call enemies.

If a terrorist were to get a hold of nuclear materials, the potential is there for a dirty bomb to be created and detonated in a populated area. The results would be unimaginable.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the growing unpopularity of President Bush, have seemingly created new threats since that fateful day in 2001. The government must do more if we are to prevent an even worse event from occurring in our future.

Utilize trained professionals to provide security

or offer adequate training to interested individuals. Military personnel may not be needed, but some form of armed presence should be in place as well; armed terrorists cannot be subdued with mace and batons.

There also must be an increase in federal funding for security at the college's reactors. The schools simply cannot afford to foot the bill for the increase; otherwise some of the facilities may be forced to close.

It serves no purpose to try and lay the blame on any one entity. However, what is required right now is action and it's time for the federal government and the NRC to take some before it's too late.

EDITORIAL

Reservists being unfairly burdened

Not since the days of the Vietnam War has the military been under such pressure. A stabilization effort in Afghanistan that has all but vanished from the minds of most Americans; a war in Iraq that is losing support both at home and overseas as casualties continue to mount daily.

With the casualties in Iraq now approaching 2,000, a disturbing trend is beginning to emerge - Reservists have accounted for nearly one-quarter, or 487, of all

U.S. deaths since the war in Iraq began.

While that may not seem like such a large number, consider the fact that those numbers have been steadily increasing with each passing month. During the five weeks it took to topple Baghdad, the number was at 10 percent; in August and September of this year, that total was up to 56 percent.

As a result, recruiting is now starting to fall off, not just for active-duty military personnel but reserve personnel as well.

It's true that the active-duty Army is highly stressed and stretched thin because of operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq, but the answer is not to place less-experienced troops in harms way.

Volunteers generally sign up for the Reserves under the belief that they face less of a chance of being sent into combat. They want the money for college, so they choose the easiest route they can to achieve it.

Because of this, the Reserves basically act as a

loophole in the no-draft environment of today's political atmosphere. Individuals may not necessarily want to risk their lives for a cause they did not foresee nor fully agree with.

The military needs to act quickly and build up the Iraqi security forces; doing so will result in decreasing our troop numbers and free up some of these Reservists who just want to come home.

Otherwise, the hostility in our own country will just continue to grow.

OPINION

'Intervention' provides hope for many



Wendy Gobin
Community Editor

A couple of weeks ago, I was ranting and raving that all of the reality shows on television were as shallow and far away from reality as a person could get.

However, since I have done some more "research," I feel the need to amend my previous opinion. The reason is I have discovered the show, "Intervention" on A&E.

This is one of the most honest looks at the disease of addiction that I have seen in a long time.

As a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, I find the stories both inspirational and familiar. When I watch the show, it is like watching, on some level, part of my own life play out on the screen. I remember vividly the horror of where I was: knowing that I was killing myself slowly but still unable to stop.

I cheer for the people on the show, hoping that they to treatment and stay clean while at the same time asking myself if I would be willing to go on television if I were in their shoes.

I have long debated whether or not to share this part of my life out of fear of what people might think or the repercussions of my admission.

While some may criticize "Intervention," construing it as exploitation, I think that if even one person decides to get help after watching it, it's worth it.

I guess that's why I'm sharing this very personal information now. I've worked so hard to get to where I am, and I'm truly grateful. I have been blessed beyond my wildest dreams, but I realize I wouldn't have anything if it weren't for the brave souls in recovery who shared their experience, strength and hope with me.

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