

Internet as a space of creation, freedom of expression and abuse of freedom - Offenses and protection of the honor and reputation of individuals.*

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Nowadays, the individual faces the need to reconcile a diverse and liberated personality with the obligations and rules of a multi-flat and demanding everyday life. People therefore develop and demonstrate a different public image for each social group in which they operate, seeking refuge for even the darkest and most vulnerable aspects of themselves.

This paper argues that the Internet in principle serves the need of individuals to express freely and in safety aspects of their personality, which in their everyday life they are forced to silence. It attempts to demonstrate, however, that at the same time modern technology and especially the Internet itself bring new threats for the reputation of individuals. On the one hand, monitoring and recording someone's offline and online activities has become much simpler than before, and on the other hand, it has become much easier for people to publish and disseminate defamatory material via the Internet.

The paper is structured as follows. First it highlights the Internet as a mean of expression and creativity, analyzing the idea and the potential of blogs, forums, chat rooms and online social networks, like YouTube and Facebook. Then it deals with the issue of new techniques and technologies used to steal personal data, referring to cookies, Trojan horses, spyware, call recording applications and smart phone technologies. It then addresses the issue of breach of honor and reputation of individuals via the Internet. It indicates how the relevant human right is being guaranteed worldwide (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, European Convention on Human Rights) and cites violations of this right that the state laws have criminalized (libel, slander, republication, torts of invasion of privacy etc). Then it argues that the existing legislative provisions prove to be outdated and inadequate to deal with the features of the medium Internet and to effectively protect the personality of the individual. The question posed is by which means the challenges of the Internet in relation to the users' honor and reputation could best be met. Is the answer the self-protection of users by means of technology or maybe the self-regulation of the Internet by means of the development and implementation of codes of conduct and alternative problem-solving mechanisms?