

Effectively Combating Hate on the Internet



Right-wing extremism on the Internet

The 2007 Report by jugendschutz.net

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Sponsored by

1 Approved strategy against cyber hate

Right-wing extremists use the Internet to target youngsters. As shown in this report on jugendschutz.net's project work in 2007, the organization acts on four imperative levels to counteract this problem: Continuous monitoring of the right-wing extremist's Web scene (Chap. 2) and measures against illegal content (Chap. 3) are supplemented by cooperation at both the national and the international levels (Chap. 4) and activities in the field of media education (Chap. 5).

jugendschutz.net, the cross national bureau for the protection of minors on the Internet in Germany, has been dealing with right-wing extremism on the Internet since 2000, currently sponsored by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung).

In recent years, jugendschutz.net achieved the removal of more than 1,200 illegal right-wing extremist websites in Germany and abroad. In 2007 as well, the success rate in the fight against illegal content consistently remained high at 80 %. Beyond this, minors and adults learned how to better deal with right-wing extremist hate on the Internet in more than 250 workshops.

jugendschutz.net achieves removal of illegal content in four out of five cases.

2 Right-wing extremism on the Internet – 2007

Overview: Strong growth - consolidation - expansion

In 2007, the amount of right-wing extremist websites in German language reached an all-time high since jugendschutz.net started to investigate in 2000. The team monitored 1,635 websites and documented more than 750 right-wing extremist videos and profiles on Web 2.0 platforms like YouTube or SchülerVZ (a social network for pupils).

In particular regional neo-Nazi groups (299 websites) and the German extreme right political party NPD (191 websites) marked an increase of over 30 %. In addition, an increasing number of right-wing extremist mail-order companies used the Internet to sell right-wing music and Nazi memorabilia; the team documented 166 sales platforms.

NPD and neo-Nazi groups: 30 % more websites

At the same time, the most relevant websites were being consolidated: More than 92 % of bands and music platforms, as well as sites from right-wing extremist parties and magazines, were still online at the end of the year (previous year: 82 %). The consolidation even overlapped in areas that used to be inconsistent like neo-Nazi groups or private websites. 1,414 of the 1,635 Web sites being monitored were still online as per 31 December 2007.

Most of the right-wing extremist websites are online constantly.

Special internal services of the right-wing extremist scene have also been established. For example, 12 % of website operators uploaded their content on the Internet using servers of so-called neo-Nazi providers. Other services offered a wide range from professional web design to the production and marketing of right-wing extremist music all the way to right-wing extremist lifestyle products.

12 % of websites use services of Neo-Nazi providers

Frequent use of German servers – less illegal content

In 2007 as well, right-wing extremists increasingly abused German services when disseminating their propaganda. More than 78 % of right-wing extremist websites used servers in Germany. Right-wing extremist pages based abroad usually uploaded their content using services from organizations located in the United States (63 %).

At the same time, the total amount of illegal content decreased: Only about 16 % of all documented websites infringed German laws (previous year: 22 %), only 12 % of the websites located in Germany contained violations (previous year: 18 percent This is also a result of continuous measures taken by jugendschutz.net.

Design, multimedia, interactivity – Hate mongers target kids



Communication and multimedia elements increased significantly on right-wing extremist websites, where they are used to enhance their attractiveness. In 2007, more than twice as many websites integrated a forum (12 %) or a chat box (4 %). 22 % had a guest book (previous year:

14 %). The rate of sites with music, Flash animations or videos doubled to 20 %. Special services for mobile phones came in as a new element.

In the meantime, Web 2.0-style designs, as well as the abuse of paroles and symbols from other youth cultural scenes, have become a characteristic of many right-wing extremist websites. As a consequence many of them appear harmless and appealing to youngsters at first sight, a factor that is particularly problematic.

Increasing abuse of web 2.0 platforms

Web 2.0 platforms such as social networks, blogs or video communities are very popular amongst children and teenagers. At the same time, they are very interesting for right-wing extremists due to the large potential range (millions of users). Here they have the chance to disseminate their neo-Nazi material with less effort but a tremendous effect: Propaganda posted in these communities reaches immense levels of distribution.

Accordingly, it is easy to get in contact with right-wing extremists in many areas of social networks: jugendschutz.net documented more than 70 profiles with racist statements, advertising for right-wing extremist bands and neo-Nazi groups or blatant Nazi propaganda on social networks like SchuelerVZ, a community especially for children and youngsters. Entries in self-portraits, guest books and comments led to explicit right-wing extremist websites.

The number of racist and neo-Nazi videos also increased in 2007 along with the rising number of users on YouTube. There jugendschutz.net documented close to 700 videos with hate and neo-Nazi content like illegal mu-

Multimedia hate is no longer just available on the PC. Nowadays, it is also available for mobile phones.

20 percent of the websites incorporate music, Flash animations or videos.

Social networks offer means of contact with the right-wing extremist scene.

700 Videos on YouTube with illegal neo-Nazi content documented



sic of the right-wing extremist band Landser.

Modeled on YouTube explicit neo-Nazi video platforms also emerged in 2007. jugendschutz.net succeeded in getting removed the platform 88tube removed which was based in the USA and contained hate speech and a video showing two men being executed by Russian neo-Nazis.

Neo-Nazi video communities showed videos of real-life executions.

Neo-Nazi groups lure teenagers with events

Websites from neo-Nazi groups are in particular problematic for youngsters, as in most cases they are locally based, they mobilize for concrete actions and aim at recruiting new comrades-in-arms.

The sites are designed to attract young Internet users and they often avoid obvious neo-Nazi propaganda. Right-wing extremists bait with excursions like trips to a lake, sightseeing or street theater. In these cases, though, it is never just about fun, but rather intended to pass on and indoctrinate with right-wing extremist messages.

jugendschutz.net documented 299 websites of neo-Nazi groups, four times more than 2003.

Therefore, it is particularly alarming that the number of sites has more than quadrupled since 2003: In 2007, the team counted 299 websites, 67 contained illegal content. In almost all cases, jugendschutz.net succeeded in getting these sites removed. 213 websites of neo-Nazi groups were still online as per 31 December 2007.

In addition, in 2007, more than 40 websites advertising for demonstrations and marches existed. Besides that jugendschutz.net documented 18 sites of supposed citizens' initiatives from the neo-Nazi spectrum where political topics were exploited for right-wing extremist propaganda.

NPD websites: Upgraded with multi-media

The German extreme right party NPD has also significantly upgraded its Internet activities in 2007. jugendschutz.net counted a total of 191 websites of NPD associations, of which 176 were still online as per 31 December 07. At the same time, multi-media elements such as mobilization videos or, for the first time, newsletters downloadable to mobile phones were registered.

The extreme right party NPD puts its stakes on youth welfare services.

As a new trend several NPD websites promoted special offers like tutoring or leisure attractions well known out of the field of youth welfare and usually submitted by municipalities and youth organizations. Besides that, propagandistic magazines like "Perplex" or "Rechts vor Links" (= Right before Left), whitewashed as pupils' newspapers, were offered as downloads or advertised on the web.

3 Effective measures against hate on the Web

jugendschutz.net aims at the quick removal of illegal right-wing extremists' Internet platforms. Nowadays the team achieves this goal in four out of five cases. One strategy that has proven to be particularly effective is to contact

the provider who makes the content available on the Net.

In 2007, jugendschutz.net also initiated the indexing of 44 websites in order to limit their potential range. In Germany it is forbidden to make websites that have been considered to be endangering to youngsters and as a consequence listed in the index by the Federal Office for the Approval of Media Endangering Youths (BPjM) available to minors. In the meantime, German search engine operators codified a self-regulatory agreement not to display websites as search hits that have been indexed.

jugendschutz.net encourages indexing in order to prevent illegal websites to appear in search engines.

Less content against the law

In 2007, 16 % of the websites monitored were assessed as illegal (previous year: 22 %). 90 % of these contained material that is strictly forbidden in Germany such as the dissemination of insignia of organizations that are forbidden in Germany (62 %), hate speech (17 %) or Holocaust denial (9%) jugendschutz.net classified 10 % as being endangering to youngsters because of the distortion of historical facts regarding the crimes of National Socialism, racism or the promotion of an anti-democratic orientation.

Only 16 % of all websites contained illegal content.

Contacting providers is most effective

In 2007 the team achieved almost all of its successes (93 %) by contacting providers, who then closed the websites or removed the illegal content. This also applied to content hosted abroad, with a rate of 82 % of all newly recorded violations, even though the legal options for action in Germany remedies of German bureaus are limited. In these cases, jugendschutz.net informs the host provider and refers to the terms of use, which usually prohibit racist and discriminatory content, and contacts the host provider.

Illegal content can also be quickly removed abroad.

	Illegal German-cases		Illegal foreign cases		Total
	Old cases previous years	New cases 2007	Old cases previous years	New cases 2007	
Offline or illegal content removed following action	45	138	17	32	232
Online with no changes following action	2	2	9	7	20
Total number of action taken to achieve removal	187		65		252

Removal of illegal Nazi videos on YouTube



In 2007, jugendschutz.net succeeded in establishing an agreement with the major video community YouTube (now owned by Google) on the removal of illegal right-wing extremist videos. Since then, the team regularly reports Nazi videos which are then either deleted or blocked for German users by YouTube/Google. Unfortunately, YouTube/Google has not yet taken sufficient action on its video platform to prevent renewed uploads of videos that have already been deleted.

[jugendschutz.net](#) started successful co-operation with YouTube/Google to get neo-Nazi material removed

Good example: ISP puts Nazi music on a blacklist

In one case, a foreign provider even took further action after jugendschutz.net drew his attention to the massive abuse of his portal by right-wing extremists. The big Swiss file host provider Rapidshare not only removed neo-Nazi music from his servers but also put them on a blacklist in order to stop the music from being disseminated within his service.

The first ISP took sustained action.

4 International networking – INACH

In order to effectively combat hate propaganda it is required to establish cross-national instruments that will also enable to punish violations at international level. This is what INACH, the unique network of international online complaints bureaus against hate on the Internet, promotes.

18 organizations from Europe and overseas combat hate propaganda (www.inach.net)

Within the last year the International Network Against Cyber Hate gained several new organizations (from Austria, France, Romania, Czech Republic) as members, so today 18 partners from Europe and overseas act together. Unfortunately the network does not dispose of its own financial resources. A stable financial and structural basis that guarantees the sustainability of INACH is one important goal for the future.

All INACH partners succeed in getting hate sites removed from the Internet despite the fact that legal provisions are often lacking. Numerous partners additionally rely on educational work. All members regard the increasing dissemination of discriminatory content in web 2.0 platforms as a massive problem.

The problem of hate content on web 2.0 platforms confronts all INACH members.

Educational work must be strengthened

The Annual Conference where discussions between INACH and confirmed experts traditionally take place was held in the New Synagogue in Berlin November 8th and 9th to celebrate the network's fifth anniversary. More than 50 international guests took part in this conference, which was organized by jugendschutz.net.

In a resolution, INACH calls on the EU and the OSCE to combat hate on the Internet (www.jugendschutz.net/pdf/Resolution_d_utsch.pdf)

In a resolution that was officially presented to the OSCE representative, the members called on the OSCE to strengthen the educational work in the fight against hate on the Internet. The responsibility of industry and society in particular will be subject of discussion at the 2008 conference in Washington, D.C.. The speeches and discussions of the Berlin conference will be compiled and published in a documentation.

5 Preventive media education

One of the project's major goals lies in the area of prevention, promoting tolerance and non-discrimination and practicing forms of civil courage on the Internet. Therefore the team has developed diverse didactical concepts, conducts workshops with different target groups and launches educational handouts.

Governmental schooling program including subject Cyber Hate

In 2007, the subject of right-wing extremism on the Internet was successfully integrated into a governmental schooling program. jugendschutz.net developed a training module which was finally accredited as an official component of professional education for teachers by the Institute for Quality Development in the State of Hesse (Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung in Hessen). The training workshops were realized in co-operation with the State Media Authority (Hessische Landesanstalt für privaten Rundfunk) and the State Agency for Civic Education of Hesse (Hessische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung) and will proceed in 2008/2009,



Sensitizing against right-wing extremism on a broad scale

jugendschutz.net, along with the Ministry of the Interior and the Central Agency for Civic Education in North Rhine-Westphalia, sensitized more than 1000 minors at prevention events. jugendschutz.net and the Ministry likewise published the book "Erlebniswelt Rechtsextremismus – Menschenverachtung mit Unterhaltungswert" (= Extreme right-wing world of adventure – contempt for humanity with entertainment value). Modern right-wing extremism, targeting minors with music and websites, is the center of the book and 15 didactical ideas are presented to provide stimuli for educational work. The book can be obtained from the Federal Agency for Civic Education.

Book and CD: "Erlebniswelt Rechtsextremismus" ("Right-wing extremism as world of adventure"), Wochenschauverlag 2007

6 Conclusions

jugendschutz.net's web monitoring has shown that the number of right-wing extremist websites is on the rise despite sustained successes in the fight against illegal content. In 2007, this number even climbed to an all-time high since the project work started in 2000.

What makes web 2.0 difficult to control is the fleetingness of content and the mass of users. Many providers remove illegal content after being notified by jugendschutz.net, the problem still persists. Here, the providers have to develop and invest in technical means and human resources in order to effectively prevent the dissemination of illegal right-wing extremist content.

Web 2.0 providers must sustainably prevent abuse of their platforms.

Right-wing extremism on the Internet is not a short-term phenomenon. Thanks to the Federal Agency for Civic Education sponsoring the project, jugendschutz.net has been able to carry out its work successfully thus far. In order to combat hate on the Internet it is necessary to continuously rely on a dual strategy consisting of effective counter-measures and promoting educational work in the area of media. Specifically this approach in jugendschutz.net's project work is also exemplary in an international context.

7 Figures: Right-wing extremism on the Internet

Hate content reaches an all-time high:

- 1635 right-wing extremist Web sites assessed
- 2062 URLs documented
- 690 hate videos and 70 right-wing extremist profiles in web 2.0 platforms recorded

Consistently high rate of success:

- Removal was achieved in 80 % of all illegal cases (previous year: 79 %)

An increase of more than 30 % of NPD and neo-Nazi sites:

- neo-Nazi groups: 299 websites (previous year: 187)
- NPD: 191 websites (previous year: 131)

Expanded internal services of the right-wing extremist scene

- 166 websites of right-wing extremist mail-order companies
- Numerous other services ranging from web design to tattoos

Increased use of German services:

- More than 78 % of right-wing extremist content was disseminated via servers in Germany
- 63 % of the sites based abroad abused services from the United States

Decrease in illegal content:

- Total rate of monitored websites: 16 % (previous year: 18 %) were illegal
- Total rate of monitored websites in Germany: 12 % (previous year: 18 %) were illegal