A Space for Hate:

The White Power Movement's Adaptation into Cyberspace

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Abstract

This article examines how three prominent white-supremacy websites have adapted their extremist agendas into the online culture of cyberspace. The study applies frame analysis to the Creativity Alliance, KKK, and Stormfront websites to reveal the new "user-friendly" face of organized hate. Through context and images, two central frames emerged from each site: The *uprising frame*, that crafted an underlying message of widespread "white-oppression" to mobilize its members, and the *information frame*, which legitimized that cause under the pretext of a community-based website and research tool. From this study, it appears these inscribers of "white power" have effectively utilized these themes and the online culture of convergent media and social networking to attract younger net-savvy audiences. Links to sites like Youtube and Wikipedia signify a movement that is keeping up with the times, while the global networking component of these pages further suggests intent to grow the cause into a worldwide community.

Keywords: convergence, cyberspace, hate speech, propaganda, white power movement, Internet law, binary discourse, and frame analysis.

Introduction

When the global community entered into the computerized information age, the doors to cyberspace were opened to anyone who could access and utilize the new medium. Through increased connectivity, pre-existing forums of socio-political expression found new homes in the virtual world where the concept of a community became a global sphere of unlimited mass communicative potential. Suddenly, everyone had a microphone on the world stage. Hate speech, as a form of free socio-political expression, quickly emerged on the World Wide Web

through websites, chat rooms, and more recently, the blogosphere. The White Power Movement (WPM) is one such form of socio-political hate speech that harnessed the platform of the Internet forum to expound upon its own agenda. Palti (2005) cites the "first hate Web site (sponsored by a white supremacist group) appeared on the Internet in March 1995. Today the number of hate sites on the net exceeds 4,000, according to Richard Eaton, a researcher at the Simon Wiesenthal Center" (p. 2).

Hate speech, as defined by McMasters (1999), is "that which offends, threatens, or insults groups based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or a number of other traits" (p. 3). This paper sought to examine a representative sample of white supremacy cyber-activity in 2007 by analyzing three prominent websites of racially targeted content. This research considers attributes of cyber-communication that are unique to the Internet, and examines those constructs as the tools by which the WPM is able to deliver its message of hate. Essentially, this paper posed two overarching questions in a case-study review of the select websites:

RQ1: How do these WPM websites adapt to the culture of cyberspace to attract new recruits?

RQ2: How do these WPM websites frame their message of white supremacy for Internet-users?

In order to examine these aspects, one must first consider white supremacist speech itself with specific regard to its history as a mass medium, functionality as a form of propaganda, and the legal concerns of this form of free expression. Once this groundwork has been examined, the next step is to place hate speech against the backdrop of the Internet mass medium which has its own history, functionality, and legal concerns. The Internet of 2009 breeds a new culture of youth-based activity which, as this paper will suggest, meets both the needs and agenda of the white power movement.

White Supremacy and Mass Communication

White supremacist thought has had a long tradition of utilizing the modes of mass communication to disseminate its cause unto the people. Often regarded as hateful propaganda, the WPM has taken on many forms under the guise of a variety of social organizations. From a national party, such as the Nazi party, to the private chapters of the Ku Klux Klan, to the college campuses where young neo-Nazism has found a rebirth in modern-day American society, hate speech has always been there in organized fashion. Their message is simple, expressed here by one of the forbearers of the cause, Matt Hale, founder of the World Church of the Creator:

> Hale advocates a total separation of the races in order to protect the genetic integrity of the White race from the threats posed by the so-called "mud races," in which he includes Jews, African Americans, and all other racial and ethnic minorities. Hale promotes the elimination of non-White races from the United States by "repatriation to countries of origin." (Loeb, 1999. p. 12)

This type of message that combines themes of racial supremacy with suggestions of ethnic cleansing has been echoed by racists throughout history. What changes over time is not those messages of hate, nor the suppliers of that cause – it is the recipients. As each generation moves forward and societies progress, the audience to whom such messages are intended changes, and so the methods for reaching them become more complex and personalized. In order to effectively disseminate a lasting message of white supremacy, a movement has to utilize all elements of media that can be accessed by an intended audience. Anything short of this would leave room for messages of opposition, logic, doubt and dismissal. The Nazi's understood this well when they formed the Ministry of Propaganda. This subdivision of the Nazi party was headed by Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler's second in command. Under his direction,

the Ministry of Propaganda was the essential tool of Nazi fanaticism as it systematically used media-based propaganda in horrific, yet groundbreaking ways. The Ministry was broken into seven departments intended to oversee every sphere of German culture; "Literature, news media, radio, theatre, music, visual arts, cinema" (Dornberg, 1982, p. 49). In this way, the Nazis were able to completely restructure the media into an authoritarian system. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Hitler regime understood the mobilizing power of the latest wave of media, the radio, as means for uniting the German people under the Nazi banner:

> The Nazis were aware that the radio was the most efficient propaganda vehicle. Thus, inexpensive radio sets ("people's receivers") … were sold or distributed without cost. Between 1933 and 1941, the proportion of German families owning a radio rose from 25 percent to 65 percent. (USHMM, 2006)

Today, radio would no longer be considered "the most efficient propaganda vehicle" for white supremacists to reach mass audiences. The Internet has successfully combined the elements of news media, literature, music, television and cinema into one form of global communication. Samoriski (2002) has defined this ongoing process as *convergence* whereby "all media, words, sounds, and picture will merge…with hybrids like Web-TV and AOL TV" (p. 21). This, Samoriski asserts, has enabled the Internet to become a "specialized" mass medium that can filter together specific communities with fully interactive capabilities such as message board blogging and integrated podcasts. If such a medium had existed in 1933, Adolf Hitler could have disseminated Nazi propaganda to the world and potentially united an even larger following, save one drawback. The Internet is not a closed forum. As stated, virtually anyone can access and challenge a website, thus modern-day white supremacist organizations are forced to tangle with the unlimited influx of counter-thought and free

speech. As Steele (1996) asserts, "The best remedy for hate speech is more speech. And the World Wide Web, which can be expanded infinitely, offers anyone who wishes to set up opposing viewpoints the opportunity to do so" (p. 21). This brings us back to the first concern of *how* the WPM is able to use the "culture of cyberspace" to attract Internet users and potential recruits, and essentially, mobilize their movement.

Internet Culture

The World Wide Web is a vast community where activities such as downloading music and movies, and the daily posting of an assortment of viewpoints are all part of the online culture. The "anything goes" and sometimes illegal nature of the web is supported by the Internet's anonymous and decentralized framework. While it seems sensible that the same laws which apply to the actual world should likewise apply to the virtual one, Van Dijk (2005) reminds us that "existing legislation depends on clearly demonstrable, localizable and liable legal persons and ownership titles" (p. 129). In cyberspace, clear lines of jurisdiction have been replaced by networks connecting to other networks *world wide,* and often the Internet user is only as identifiable as their screen name allows. In their exploration of the psychological uses of the Internet, Magdoff & Rubin (2003) suggest, "clearly, on the Net you need not necessarily be who you were when you turned on the computer…you may switch gender, shave years off your age" (p. 210). This is significant because it has allowed for a freer form of indulgence into web communities often considered taboos of external society, but which have flourished in the secret confines of cyberspace. In this world, Internet users of all ages can visit any chat room to meet a stranger, view obscene material from countries with different standards of child pornography, and join WPM communities that promote the spread of white supremacist agendas and racial wars.

Another unique quality of online culture, perhaps most relevant to the purposes of the WPM is that it has allowed anyone to become a publisher. If thought of as a giant bookstore where both products *and* ideas are sold, the Internet has no discretion over what items will stock its shelves. All one needs in this day and age to publish an idea or ignite a cause is a website and an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to disseminate that content. Most of the time, ISPs are like storage facilities, unaware of the content they host. And without incentive to do so, why would they? For providers like AOL, there are no legal ramifications in place that deem the ISP a "publisher" should one of their websites do something illegal. According to Shyles (2003), "There has been dispute over whether ISP's are publishers or distributors. This classification is important because it is often difficult to track down the originator of a defamatory statement on the Internet" (p. 343). For the white supremacy website, this is both good and bad news. On one hand, it allows any racial-hate-based organization ease with which to post content on the web, because it is in the best interest of ISPs to "avoid exercising any kind of editorial control or parental screening in order to avoid liability as publishers" (p. 343). On the other hand, as publishers of the website the WPM organization *can* be held liable for any practiced form of speech that is not protected by the First Amendment, i.e. libel, slander (via audio podcasts), or more relevant to these purposes, speech that is deemed "threatening or harassing" (Samoriski, 2003, p. 255).

Legal Ramifications of Hate Speech

While most unpopular speech in the United States is constitutionally-protected in the marketplace of ideas, many courts have introduced exceptions to *hate speech* where language has been used to promote and incite violence against another person or group of people. In *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire,* the Court ruled that "insulting or "fighting words" – those that by

their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace," are in fact, unlawful (p. 254). Over the last fifty years, other hate speech-based court cases have rendered decisions that "have added such terms as "clear and present danger," "fighting words," "incitement to…imminent lawless action," and "the heckler's veto" to the legal lexicon" (McMasters, 1999, p. 5). However, this does not necessarily condemn the voices of anti-Semitism or racists by themselves, and in fact, most white supremacy groups have adapted with the times, using language that promotes their cause while carefully not "inciting" *published* violence. The second concern of this study, the framing of the WPM's online message, examines the very means by which a website can suggest hateful actions without articulating a direct form of the diction listed above.

One of the benefits of cyberspace is that it provides greater cover and anonymity for white supremacy to flourish than in open society where the movement's borderline-illegal presence is transparent to the public. In the cyber world, the movement is less limited:

> Organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), traditionally involved in real-world demonstrations, parades, and leafleting to gain publicity, have found the ease and low cost of Internet publishing ideally suited for their public relations needs. Such organizations are able to create and maintain Web sites to communicate with existing members and reach new ones much more cheaply than they can produce and distribute a newsletter or magazine. Hate groups are also able to link to other sites, thereby creating a hate network on the Internet. (Samoriski, 2002, p. 251)

This brings us back to the young Internet user, often referred to as Generation Z – the target audience of the white power movement. Generation Z was born into the age of

cyberspace. They use the web for everything from communicating with friends to finding romance, shopping for music, downloading homework, watching a movie, posting their own, or checking in with the family. For almost every function of external society, the Generation Z child has been brought up with the convenient e-version of that function. From a legal standpoint, the youth-culture of the World Wide Web signals the greatest threat to a child's safety. Whereas the adult online user is likely to spot a danger to their privacy, identity, and well-being, a child enters the online world with the same freedoms but little knowledge of identity theft, sexual predators, and other menacing elements of the virtual world.

The Child Online Protection Act (COPA), passed by Congress in a 1998 budget bill, aimed to "narrow the scope of law" to protect minors from harmful online material (Samoriski, 2003, p. 286). The problem with COPA, aside from the First Amendment legal debate that surrounds it, is that the measure is aimed specifically at protecting children from obscene content or "sexual contact." COPA has thus far yielded little results and much criticism, and it has also left the doors to the hate-speech community wide open for minors to browse. The important legal element to consider here is that the Internet is not just a space for content to emerge, although laws seem to be focused heavily on content alone. The Internet is also a vast of communities where people can actually "go." When thought of in this manner, the young Internet user enters a virtual theme park every time they sign on. They can visit any website they please, chat with new friends, join a community, and even take the relationship further. The difference here is that a theme park community such as Walt Disney World has cameras monitoring every corner, safety measures on every ride, and private and public security officers on site, and of course, medical centers in case of emergency. In most cases, these precautions are not just in place to please the park visitor, they are the law. So why are US-based online

communities not treated the same? Currently, there are no laws in place that force an ISP to monitor and record all kids' chat sites, and no federal *online* agency to report to in the event that an ISP does not do its job. Legally, the teenage Internet user becomes an ideal target in this world because of their open minds, but also because the community itself goes virtually unchecked, and entrance at the gate is free. Once optimum recruiting conditions has been set, the white power movement moves in.

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

An exploration of the white supremacy movement and its impact on any public audience must include a thorough consideration of propaganda as the primary tool of racist or anti-Semitic communication as expressed through the three websites selected for this study. When looking for indicators of propaganda, it is also important to examine critical theories and concepts pertaining to this mass communicative device in order to properly define it. For this, Jowett and O'Donnell's (1986) *Propaganda and Persuasion* provides strong designations and functions for this multifaceted concept of media persuasion.

Jowett and O'Donnell define propaganda as a mass communicative device that is "associated with control and is regarded as a deliberate attempt to alter or maintain a balance of power that is advantageous to the propagandist" (p. 15). In terms of a general analytical spectrum upon which to classify hate speech in cyberspace, Jowett and O'Donnell's "Model of Propaganda" cleverly demonstrates the separation of information and persuasion according to purpose. This model illustrates a split in the communication process between these two forces, whereby propaganda exists somewhere in between often by design, thus going unnoticed by the receiver. Jowett and O'Donnell call this method *white propaganda* under the three distinctions defined as white, gray, and black. This research examines the presentation of these various

WPM websites with particular regard to white propaganda which intends to blur the line of information and persuasion. Again, the emphasis here is on the young Internet user and the informational function of cyberspace.

In his article on the educational pitfalls of cyberspace, Borrowman (1999) focuses on students who use the Internet for Holocaust studies. As their primary research tool, Internet search engines lead the same students to the vast universe of Holocaust denial websites that tie directly into white supremacist ideologies. What he calls *academic ethos* in cyberspace speaks directly to the power of white propaganda:

> When academic ethos is at work, a reader is convinced that the writer is a rational, reasonable, intelligent individual who is engaging in an honest dialogue...readers are led to believe that a writer is being ethical and fair in the construction of his or her argument. For Holocaust deniers the construction of such an ethos is enormously important. (p.7)

There is strong evidence that this 'information research tool' structure has been applied efficiently to the make up of several WPM websites, as will be explored further in the frame analysis section of this study.

Aside from the crafted construction of white propaganda, other factors contribute to the successful reception of such material on the web. *Social Cognitive Theory* (Bandura, 1962) is a common foundation for examining the personal relationships between mass media messages and consumer reception. This theory challenged the original "hypodermic needle effect" function of media thought to transmit messages directly into the desired audience's psyche. Such was seemingly the case with Nazi propaganda in the 1930s and 1940s. Bandura and other scholars, however, did not believe that media worked in such a penetrable fashion. To measure the

response of an audience, they insisted, one could not simply ignore the audience itself. From this theory, many media scholars began to explore those factors that led to the rejection of a message as well as its reception. Among the many factors posited, *identification* spoke directly to the individual consumer that "feels a strong psychological connection to a model (i.e., if he or she feels a sense of identification with a model, social learning is likely to occur)" (Miller, 2005, p. 224). For those who are easily influenced by the white power movement, the social cognitive theory suggests that they, in fact, play an active role in their own seduction process by identifying with the message of white supremacy. This was a profound statement with regard to the "everyday citizens" of 1930s Germany who claimed to have been duped by the propagandist ideology of the Nazi party.

Today, the same principles of identification apply to hateful messages in cyberspace, though today's Internet-user is without question part of a more media-savvy generation. For any website with a socio-political agenda to reach and recruit these new members, both the community and the presentation of its message must identify with the qualities, needs, and desires of a given audience. For the white power movement, that audience is the White youth of higher education. Matthew Hale asserts, "We generally reach out to the private colleges and universities...because we want to have the elite. We are striving for that, focusing on winning the best and the brightest of the young generation" (Nieli & Swain, 2003, p. 233). This paper will take a deeper look into this process of attracting the "young generation" by considering the WPM's adaptation into a successful model community of cyberspace; fully functional, informative, engaging, and user-friendly. Further the research considers those themes behind the websites which tap into the interests of their target audience, mainly *frames* of radical information and rebellion.

Frame Analysis

Frame analysis provides an ideal measuring device for exposing how these various WPM media messages are shaped by their inscribers for a desired interpretation by a mass audience, in this case, online visitors. Entman (2003) posits that, "most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omissions of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience" (p. 54). In other words, a news frame is designed with a purpose to convey a specific understanding of an issue or idea. The WPM thrives on this concept in its presentation of "the facts" that support its mission statement while simultaneously overlooking any form of criticism or counter argument. The websites examined in this study chose select frames with which to present their messages of anti-Semitism, racism, and white supremacy. In their study, "White Supremacists, Oppositional Culture and the World Wide Web," Adams & Roscigno attribute the success of the WPM to the recurring themes of "evil conspirators" (Blacks and Jews) that must be defended against through "righteous crusade" (of the White race). They assert, "It is this juxtaposition of conspiracies with crusades that has provided the dominant recruitment frame and identity for many white supremacist organizations" (2005). To examine this and other frame strategies further, this paper will go directly to the source, the White Supremacists themselves. Nieli and Swain's (2003) *Contemporary Voices of White Nationalism in America* is an excellent compilation of in-depth interviews with the leaders of the modern-day white power movement. This research will draw on perspectives about white supremacy, the Internet function, and those carefully interwoven messages of racism from the very inscribers. Among the key interviewees, Nieli and Swain gain insights from Don Black, publisher of the white power website Stormfront.org, Matthew Hale, father of the Creativity Alliance, as well as perspectives from a former KKK leader, David Duke.

Methodology

The three primary websites under review – stormfront.org, creativityalliance.com, and kkk.com – were chosen from a wide variety of WPM homepages. This research narrowed its focus upon these three websites because they each represented well-recognized hate groups in American society. Stormfront.org, perhaps the most advanced of the hate group websites, was born on the Internet in 1995. Its founder, Don Black was a longtime student of the WPM and a former member of the KKK which he helped revitalize with David Duke. Stormfront reportedly receives "tens of thousands of visitors each month" who engage in forums and net links to "the outer fringes of neo-Nazi and white militia groups" (Nieli & Swain, 2003, p. 153).

Following Stormfront, the Creative Alliance was chosen because of its high profile legal status. This group received national attention from the notoriety of its founding father, Matthew Hale, who has appeared in several TV newscasts and magazine interviews. Hale, who was denied his law license by the Illinois Bar Association, went on to become "pontifex maximus" of the World Church of the Creator. Pontifex maximus started his website in 2005 out of his home office, the second floor study of his father's house in East Peoria, Illinois (Cannon & Cohen, 1999). The movement and its website currently have a worldwide membership.

Lastly, the KKK needs little introduction in the world of hate groups. They are, perhaps, the most recognizable white power movement in the United States. Known-well for their bigoted platform and the white hoods they hide behind, the Internet has provided a new form of anonymity for the KKK where they can rebuild their "political" network of hate.

With the emergence of the World Wide Web, the KKK, Creativity Alliance, and Stormfront each faced the same challenge – to construct a website that could adapt the WPM platform into the norms of a cyber-community. To measure this adaptation, this research chose

to study the layout of each website's homepage using its featured components as the units of analysis (i.e., convergent media, forums, chat communities, links, pictorial symbols). These units collectively denote a specific presentation of the movement's public face or persona as expressed on their website. At the same time, they suggest an audience to whom certain features like "news" or "music and entertainment" are purposely directed. To the creators of these websites, these target-audiences represent more than just anonymous web-browsers passing through – they are potential recruits.

Once the crafted layout of each website has been presented, the research will examine the messages within them. For this, the study uses frame analysis as its central method of analysis to answer the overarching question of how certain themes are packaged for public consumption. The specific textual components to be examined here are the *mission statements* ("about us"), as well as the various *posted forums* of active website members. This examination will focus particular attention on binary discourse as the method of framing (Coe, Domke, Graham, John, & Pickard, 2004). Binary discourse in media is the process of presenting a message along the lines of two binary terms or concepts such as weak and strong, guilty and innocent, black and white. Binary discourse gives a WPM website the ability to "represent the world as dichotomized absolutes" (p. 235), where one side is usually given a "moral power" over the other – a sustaining value to which the young, White visitor can associate a *righteous* belonging.

This study begins by presenting findings from the initial website presentation analysis, followed by the frame analysis component of its content. Each study will provide evidence from the three examined websites, collectively, while citing notable distinctions when evident. Lastly, the research will conclude by extending the discussion on hate speech in cyberspace to a broader perspective of its limitations, failings, opponents, and its future.

Three Examined Websites, Part I: Visitors at the Gate

Keeping the Internet-user in mind, the initial investigation begins with the point of entry for each website, the homepage. The function of the homepage serves to capture the immediate attention of an Internet-user by providing pictures and symbols to which they potentially relate. Each website uses this approach in different ways. The KKK homepage (kkk.bz/hello.htm, n.d.) displays initial images of a proud American heritage. The glowing arch of the Capitol building and white stone presidential faces of Mount Rushmore surround a confederate flag on which Civil War weapons have been placed. Beneath this imagery a visitor will find the words, "Bringing a message of hope and deliverance to white America." Like the KKK, the Creativity Alliance website (creativityalliance.com, n.d.) displays its own symbolic imagery on its homepage. A red crown with an angel's halo over it rests above the letter "W" (for white). That symbol is placed within the clouds over mountains amidst the words, "Creativity Alliance, Pinnacle of Evolution." The Stormfront website (stormfront.org, n.d.) leads with a simple circle-shaped design that can only best be described as a militant or revolutionary symbol. The circle that overlaps a cross is surrounded by the words, "white pride world wide."

These three distinct images reflect the initial face of each movement. The KKK, which centers its cause heavily on politics, associates images of American pride and southern confederacy with the message of "hope and deliverance" for its visitors. This theme of white nationalism will carry through almost every aspect of its website. The Creativity Alliance, born from a religious-base, maintains that theme with its suggestive symbol connecting the "W" (white) with the halo of an angel. This holy connection of faith and race is ironically positioned near other images of Charles Darwin and the DNA helix, collectively suggesting that a higher power has genetically engineered a superior white race. Lastly, the Stormfront symbol strikes a

startling similarity with other WPM emblems of the past, primarily the Nazi Swastika. On the surface, such a sign appears harmless – shapes and lines in black and white. However, when put into context with the mantra "white pride world wide" that symbol takes on a different shape, one that borrows its simplicity from the Nazi movement that sewed its Swastika onto flags and sleeves. Incidentally, the Stormfront resistance symbol is sold as flags, patches, and screensavers in the "classified ads" section of its website.

As one scrolls down each page, the audience for whom such visitation was designed becomes more apparent. The websites each provide specified forums that speak to the various interests of their users. While one might expect such features to contain racial slurs or themes of white power, the presentation is designed to act as a fully functional cyber-community. Select forum categories identify potential visitors under the titles "Fellow Patriots," "Youth Corp: The Crusaders," "Parents," "Women," "Fellow Christians," and "Law Enforcement." The Stormfront website, in particular, offers several forums for the educated visitor interested in engaging in matters of "Theology," "Poetry," "Science, Technology, and Race."

In terms of features, the websites present an array of activities for the community. Like most WPM websites, the Creativity Alliance supplies a lengthy history and information about its founders, but it also provides a variety of downloads that offer everything from free online books to audio links of radio podcasts which connect directly to the user's media player. There is even a new video download section on the site that streams directly through CA-TV – a broadcast of YouTube.com. The KKK homepage contains several unique features as well, geared toward deeper patriotic themes. Internet-users are provided links to contact the senators, congressmen, and even the White House, where they are further given "writing tips" on how to effectively petition these officials. This website also features pages dedicated to its long tradition which

include a "vocabulary" and "unknown facts" section. The KKK homepage also utilizes the Internet's convergence of multimedia by offering links to WhitePride.TV where a weekly newscast is aired and highlights of the 'White Christian Heritage Festival' can be viewed. Like its faith and patriotic-based counterparts, the resistance-based Stormfront organization also empowers the use of multimedia as a central feature of its website. Stormfront Broadcast Radio mimics the structure of its host website with community-style programming. Everything from "Music & Talk" to "Readings & Commentary" to "Story time with Mary Kelly" is advertised for the media-savvy web browser. In terms of its homepage features, Stormfront displays an extensive list of activities and functions for the broadest spectrum of interests. A Stormfront visitor can read up on their finances in the "Money Talks" section, get cardiovascular tips in "Health and Fitness," or shop in the "Classifieds." The "Homemaking" and "Education and Home schooling" forums suggest the targeted audience of parents in particular, while the "Youth," "Dating" and "Music and Entertainment" pages seem to cater to their *kids.*

All together, the initial structures of these web pages present the picture of an active and vibrant community in the virtual world that operates with the same user-friendly functions and multimedia capacities as an AOL, Yahoo, or college campus website. The websites feature categories of modern living that appeal to the Internet-user; blogging, chatting, streaming, shopping, dating and downloading. Further, as a medium of the World Wide Web, these sites capitalize on their newfound global access with the power of *links.* The Creativity Alliance provides connections to its sister websites in Australia, Germany, Croatia, Slovakia, as well as its community-organized page on Wikipedia where anyone can donate money to the cause. That page currently lists 21,711 donations to the Creativity Alliance ("Creativity Movement" n.d.). Perhaps a sign of an even larger global following, Stormfront provides links to its chapters in

Italy, Spain, Britain, Canada, France, Russia, South Africa, Australia, and eight other countries within this global community. In any number of languages, Stormfront exemplifies the medium of the Internet in that anyone can be a publisher in any country, thus connecting communities beyond international borders. In Stormfront en Francais, one forum title reads, "Notre veritable ENNEMI." Translation: Our true ENEMY.

Unlike Stormfront or the Creativity Alliance, the KKK website does not offer international links as its organization is primarily concerned with the American white power movement and the promoting of a national cause. Still, the KKK homepage does not miss the opportunity to link its followers with another prominent WPM community across the web – Stormfront.org. This cross-promotional tactic is strategic in the hate community in that it allows visitors of the Ku Klux Klan to align their values and interests with other movements within the click of a mouse. This used to be a much more complex merger. By itself, this application presents one of the most dangerous aspects of online usage for children who seek out chat rooms, information, and other kids "like them." Through search engines that lead to web pages, which in turn, lead to links, the Internet youth can easily find themselves inside one of these seemingly friendly communities. And whether this is done by the intention of the user, or simply by accident, the WPM does not discriminate in this case. They welcome all young, White visitors to join the community.

Part II: Behind the Walls of the Homepage

Rahowa! This is the secret mantra of the white power movement shared by both Klansmen and neo-Nazis alike. And like the homepage that presents only the outer layer of a seemingly harmless community, the word rahowa is far from a funny secret password. It is a battle cry that stands for Racial Holy War. Just as one has to "google" the word to discover its meaning, so

must they travel beyond the walls of the WPM homepage to discover its meaning. In order to gain a clearer sense of the actual goals behind each cyber community, it is pertinent to examine the mission statements and the postings that transmit through the aforementioned site forums. From this careful review, two primary frames began to emerge through the pages of all three websites that illuminated the modern messages of white supremacy.

The Uprising Frame

One of the most prevalent themes to the WPM, the *Uprising Frame* was common to all three websites. In simplest terms, the uprising frame asserts that the White race is the oppressed minority that must overcome the oppressive non-white majority. In a word, Matt Hale describes his racial movement as one of "rebellion." Speaking on his young recruits, he says, "they're rebelling against the prevalent notions of our time, notions such as that all men are created equal, notions such as that we're simply all Americans, or that we should all just get along (Nieli & Swain, 2003, p. 238). The KKK website features several statements that promote this structured message. Examples include its mission statement that refers to itself as "a grassroots movement to take back America," implying that America has been taken from the white people. Amongst their established goals, the KKK aims to stop being "victimized by the entertainment industry and news industry," "abolish all discriminative affirmative action programs," "break through the liberal wall that surrounds American colleges," and order the "reclaiming of our schools" ("Our Goal," n.d.). These messages, which appear to be targeted directly toward students, use words like "discriminative," "victimized," "break through," and "reclaiming." Words that suggest the white community has been wrongfully oppressed and must now take action as the uprising minority.

The theme of oppression has historically been a unifying banner behind which groups of people can band together to target their anger at an oppressor (or scapegoat). Stormfront founder, Don Black, says "the Net has certainly provided our movement…with the ability for the first time to compete with what we consider to be a very biased and controlled news media." That "bias," he continues, "is certainly directed against the white majority in this country and toward white culture throughout the world" (p. 155).

Stormfront members frequently reflected the uprising frame throughout their own cyber-community forums: From *Money Talks:* "the Jew won't need a middle class in my opinion…they will eradicate all whites and rule forever" ("Money Talks," n.d.). From *Health and Fitness:* "The majority of the bodybuilders were black, and those few that were White, were tanned so heavily that they too looked black... Why am I not surprised by this? Yet another thing we the White men created being taken away from us ("Health and Fitness," n.d.). From *Youth:* "My [high] school has about ten blacks in it, and my English class is purely white. Yet the school sees it is applicable to have us learn about the black culture. Not only that, but we never read anything specific about white culture. We never learn about *our* European heritage" ("Youth," n.d.). For every statement such as these, there are numerous responses that resound themes of white-oppression, Jewish-conspiracy, and unfair affirmative action policies.

This form of oppositional communication clearly presents a binary discourse whereby a new visitor to these websites quickly associates the initial themes of traditional patriotism (KKK), a religious calling (Creative Alliance), and white power (Stormfront), with a notion that these positives must then challenge the negative forces that oppose them. Those negative forces are clearly depicted as the Jews, Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, Homosexuals, and other minorities that Matt Hale collectively refers to as the "mud people" of society. Through binary discourse,

any subject matter can deliver a mobilizing message of rebellion to its visitors. Whether this discourse is presented through the context of health and fitness or home and gardening, the subtext is still black and white.

The Information Frame

Like the uprising frame that seeks to invigorate website visitors with a sense that they are David versus Goliath, the *information frame* delivers a specified purpose as well – to legitimize the cause. The information frame is found within every corner of the white power movement. It says that the WPM contains factual information that reveals the "real truth" behind Blacks, Jews, Asians, Hispanics, Homosexuals and all other "non-White oppressors." David Duke, former leader of the KKK, asserts, "The truth is that there are dramatic racial differences. Science has been uncovering these differences dramatically over the last few decades. They exist in physiological areas, psychological areas, cultural areas, and in actual physical areas … knowledge of these differences has been suppressed" (Nieli & Swain, 2003, p. 173). The WPM aims to combat that "suppression" by using the Internet as its new medium of enlightenment. The information frame is presented directly into the mission statements of these organizations such as the Creative Alliance that professes to be a "non-profit, academic reference and research group" ("About Us," n.d.). Other hate group websites use the information frame to promote the factual legitimacy of their cause. The Family Research Institute [FRI] claims to be "a non-profit scientific and educational corporation that believes the strength of our society depends on preserving America's historic moral framework and the traditional family" ("Our Mission," n.d.). A further reading into the FRI statement reveals their other intent to "generate empirical research on issues that threaten the traditional family, particularly homosexuality." Like them, the Institute for Historical Review also hides behind an initial veil of "educational, public interest."

Their public interest: "To call into question aspects of the orthodox Holocaust extermination story" ("About Us," n.d.). This very form of information is the basis behind Jowett & O'Donnell's white propaganda, because it uses the "information superhighway" as its legitimatizing resource and medium to publish "factual truths" about white supremacy.

White supremacy as information is a frame also found in the resource function of these websites. As stated, Stormfront offers its visitors information on everything from national news to finances, history to philosophy. As an "academic reference," these pages frequently reference names like Charles Darwin, Winston Churchill, Henry Ford, and former President Jimmy Carter; men whose select quotes and theories can provide the WPM with a legitimate "backing" from informative and recognized sources to essentially prove the ideology of white power. Beneath the halo/crowned "W" symbol of the Creative Alliance homepage, the biography of Charles Darwin is provided to supply "evidence…that all species have evolved over time from one or a few common ancestors through the process of natural selection." This theory, when put into the context of race, becomes an informing tool of persuasion for the case of white supremacy by way of evolution. Speaking to this point, Matt Hale says, "The whole purpose of the World Church of the Creator is to straighten out the white man's thinking so that he can become the elite, as he was really destined by nature to be" (Nieli & Swain, 2003, p. 241).

As a source of "information" on race, these websites are specifically able to attract young minds that are looking for answers and identities of their own. This speaks to the *identification* theory of social learning that seeks to build an association with a desired audience. The WPM thrives on providing this connection through features dedicated to a white heritage. The KKK site offers pages of information that chronicle the social and political heroes of white supremacy. The Creative Alliance offers links to online books such as "The White Man's Bible" which

infuses religion with a sense of racial identity. Stormfront founder, Don Black, states, "All kinds of people come to our site. Some people are curious. Some people hate us… they visited our site because they were looking for answers" (p. 160). As for "the answer," Black says, "we are planting the seeds with these people which later will grow and later may be the basis for a more viable political movement" (p. 161).

Conclusion

For the average citizen not consumed with the agenda of racial-superiority, there is little question as to whether websites like Stormfront.org or KKK.com promote hatred. Beneath the framed subtexts of oppression and radical education lie the transparent messages of racism and anti-Semitism. However, a tougher question still remains unanswered. Should this form of free speech be protected by the First Amendment? In an interview with U.S. News and World Report, Matt Hale contends that his group, the World Church of the Creator, "never incited violence" (Cannon & Cohen, 1999). On July 4th weekend, two weeks prior to giving that statement, one of Matt Hale's closest followers went on a racial shooting spree. Benjamin N. Smith, a college sophomore who joined the group one year before, selectively shot eleven people; Blacks, Jews, and Asians. He murdered two people and wounded nine before killing himself. Smith was considered the prototypical recruit, "youthful and well educated." That vague criterion can describe just about any college student who surfs the web in search of a community to call their own. Yet, Matt Hale and the Creativity Alliance are not considered accomplices if one their students decide to interpret the call for a white power uprising with violent expression. The legal debate over hate speech on the Internet continues as new hate sites emerge every year. The WPM uses this debate to further its evidence-building case against those nameless conspirators who aim to oppress them. On a larger scale, however, the WPM is still

confined to the limits of cyberspace. As vast and global as cyberspace may be, it still cannot substitute an actual community where outright racist and anti-Semitic activists are easily exposed, and their words put into action, illegal. In 2005, Matt Hale was sentenced to 40 years in prison for soliciting the murder of a Jewish federal judge, Joan Lefkow ("Matt Hale," n.d.). The World Church of the Creator organization was forced to relinquish its name due to a trademark lawsuit, the case over which Judge Lefkow was presiding. While Hale serves his sentence in the real world, the movement lives on in cyberspace where The World Church of the Creator has taken on the new name, the Creativity Alliance.

As the names change and new leaders emerge over web broadcasts, private watchdog organizations keep a close eye over websites like Stormfront.org. The Anti-Defamation League [ADL] is one such group that uses the Internet to expose and counter the false information and racist agenda of the white power movement (adl.org, n.d.). Every year, the ADL releases its report on hate group activity across the globe while working with federal law enforcement to locate future Benjamin Smiths before they strike. The Simon Wiesenthal Center is another organization dedicated to fighting online anti-Semitism. The Center has built museums dedicated to teaching tolerance while annually reporting on *Digital Terrorism and Hate.* That report focuses on "over 6,000" hate-based websites and is distributed to "government agencies, community activists, educators, and members of the media" ("About Us" n.d.). These private organizations speak to the power of citizen groups to use anti-hate speech and factual information as the best weapons against intolerance.

So what does the future hold for the white power movement in cyberspace? While watchdogs groups actively work to identify and expose these "user-friendly" communities for what they are, it appears from this study that WPM websites are continuing to adapt to the new

media. The links to YouTube.com and WhitePride.TV signify a movement that is keeping up with the times. The convergence of text, audio, and video on all three websites demonstrate the high-tech capabilities of these sites necessary for attracting younger, net-savvy audiences. The branding of hate symbols onto stickers and jackets, as well as the sales of white power music and clothing suggest an overall culture of which the WPM is attempting to market online. The international networking component of these websites further suggests its intentions to grow the cause into a worldwide movement. From these findings, one might conclude that the WPM's adaptation into cyberspace has been a success. However, only time will tell whether the success of a virtual community can manifest itself into success in the actual world where the public sphere resides. Future studies might attempt to link to the online activities of the white power movement with the physical results they produce in society. A quantitative analysis of such signifiers as chapter membership, political representation, and college-based organizations could provide further evidence of the WPM's advancements beyond its cyberspace platform. In the mean time, there remains one simple truth about the benefit of legally-protected hate speech. "Hate speech uncovers the haters" (McMasters, 1999, p. 5). If for no other reason to protect the First Amendment in cyberspace, it lifts the veil of anonymity from organizations like the Creativity Alliance, and uncovers the movement behind the community.

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