criticism. What is the smartest thing for the Affirmative to do? Strip out their entire IAC to the bare basics. The strategic incentive is not to make one’s arguments as strongly as possible, it is to avoid argumentation on potentially controversial issues as much as possible.

While many posit that the result has been a positive attitudinal change, the real result has been avoidance of controversial issues. Why take a contrary position on race when someone can call you a racist and demand that you and your ideas be rejected? From a strategic perspective, it is a loser position to advance controversial positions on race because you will be labeled. So the result is an orthodoxy that all racism (even when undefined) must be rejected; even questioning that proposition may cause you to be labeled racist, or at least call into question your commitment to social justice.

The Unfounded Slippery Slope Fear

The most powerful response to the First Amendment challenge is to argue that some speech should be deterred because of the harm it causes to listeners. But the hate speech analogy is problematic. Consider the definitions of hate speech offered by two of the primary scholars on the subject, Richard Delgado and Mari Matsuda. Professor Delgado limits the case for punishment to speech that is intended to demean through reference to race and is recognizable by a reasonable person as a racial insult. Professor Matsuda defines racist speech as “ideas so historically untenable, dangerous, and tied to perpetuation of violence that it is properly treated outside the realm of protected discourse.” This definition recognizes that the vast majority of speech should be protected, especially because it is “those on the bottom who are most hurt by the absence of rights.” University speech codes based on this scholarship typically distinguish between ‘protected free expression’ and ‘discriminatory harassment,’ with the line being drawn at intimidating behavior or personal vilification on the basis of race.

Now that we have defined hate speech, several problems with the analogy to in-round representations or discourse emerge. First, there is an enormous difference of degree. Neither Professor Delgado nor Professor Matsuda advocate punishment for relatively minor acts of intolerance. Second, hate speech requires an intent to harm or demean. Statements based in ignorance or insensitivity do not qualify as unprotected speech. The speech must be for the purpose of intimidation or injury. Third, hate speech requires a victim. Racist speech is narrowly defined as speech targeted at the member of a racial minority, not any speech that may perpetuate what someone considers a “racist idea.”

Debate rounds rarely rise even close to what these authors are defining as “racist speech.” A judge may be justified in voting against a team that uses a racial slur for the purpose of intimidating and harming their opponent. This is vastly different than someone who uses a concept or mechanism that some people believe to be racist. The requisite degree of harm, intent, and victims are typically missing.

A final point is that critiques in their current form are not necessary to prevent harmful racist speech. Instead, tournaments could approve codes of conduct among the participants that would solve the harmful examples people raise, yet people would be free to discuss race or sex or any other ‘ism’ without risk of sanction. Or we could just rely on informal norms that egregious behavior will not be tolerated in our community. Both options show there is no slippery slope that accepting any speech labeled as racist forces acceptance of egregious anti-social behavior. The community can reject the garden-variety discursive kritik as destructive of free-speech values without accepting all racist speech. This is a logical application of Professors Delgado and Matsuda’s arguments.

III. Conclusion

This essay has addressed two interrelated concepts: moral absolutism and moral exhibitionism. The first portion provides a positive account of the importance of moral absolutism to the implications of most kritiks and provides some novel strategic approaches for countering absolutist claims. The second portion examines the trade-offs produced by an increasing emphasis on the ‘value’ of discourse or representations. It concludes that the harms to free speech values are quite severe, and that the most powerful exception to freedom of speech, based in the harm speech causes to others, does not apply to the vast majority of situations in which the exception is invoked by debaters. Moral absolutism undermines deliberation by avoiding hard choices; moral exhibitionism does the same by discouraging hard arguments.

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TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE WORLD WIDE WEB TO IMPROVE DEBATE

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Just as technology has provided opportunities to improve all aspects of our lives, it has provided many new opportunities for debaters and coaches. These opportunities extend beyond research, still the most common use of technology in debate, to community-building and instruction. This essay highlights some of the many opportunities that the World Wide Web (WWW) has made available to debaters and coaches.

Research

The primary way that the WWW has been used to date has been to facilitate research. This largely began in the early 1990s when college debate teams began bringing laptops (and in some cases desktops!) to debate tournaments to access the Lexis-Nexis database. For many years, Lexis-Nexis was the only database that most debaters could access remotely at tournaments and was also one of the only databases that debaters could access that contained full-text articles.

Lexis-Nexis made its way into debate much faster than the WWW and justifiably so. It was not until 1990 that Tim Berners-Lee invented the WWW, and it wasn’t until 1995 that users could browse the WWW with a graphical interface through such popular browsers as Netscape and Internet Explorer.

Although debaters could obtain the relatively limited amount of material on the web through such protocols as gopher and ftp prior to 1995, this material was difficult to search and difficult for those with more limited technical capabilities to access. As a result, it was rarely used in debate.

But just as the development of a graphic interface facilitated an explosion in use of the web, so to did it lead to rapid increase in the use of the web by college debaters, and eventually by high school debaters. This started during the 1995-1996 college season and the web was primarily used to research affirmatives to provide Defense Support Satellites (DSS) to Israel and regulate the use of commercial satellite
images (Emory).

Since then, use of the WWW by debaters has largely paced its development and society's use of it. Over the past eight years, a tremendous amount of material that is useful to debaters has been made available online. This material can be divided into four general categories.

Periodicals. There are a large number of scholarly and popular periodicals available through the WWW at no cost. Scholarly foreign policy publications include The Washington Quarterly (twq.com), Foreign Policy (foreignpolicy.com), and Foreign Affairs (foreignaffairs.org). Popular weekly periodicals include Business Week (businessweek.com) and Newsweek (msnbc.com/news/NWFront_Front.asp). Many high school debaters may not have access to these scholarly foreign policy publications in their own libraries.

Topic-specific periodicals include California Coast and Ocean (coes.ca.gov/coastalconservancy/Publications/pubs.htm) and the Marine Fisheries Review (http://sro.nwr.noaa.gov/mcontent.htm).

Newspaper and newswires. Newspapers and newswires are what most people are familiar with on the web. Debaters can access many of the articles in such reputable papers as the New York Times (nytimes.com), the Christian Science Monitor (csmonitor.com), and the Washington Post (washingtonpost.com) online at no charge. At the Washington Post site debaters and coaches can also search the Associated Press and Reuters newswires. Sites such as Draypop.com and Google News (http://news.google.com) can be used to search thousands of new sites at a single point for the most recent information. These sites index thousands of sources that are not available on pay service applications such as Lexis-Nexis. Ocean-specific news can be found at the Ocean Futures Society (http://www.oceanfutures.org/news/news_index.asp).

Government information. Almost all government information that is publicly-available is available online. The General Accounting Office (gao.gov), an independent agency that evaluates new proposals and existing programs from a relatively objective point of view, releases all of its reports available online as soon as they are complete. Almost all of the Congressional committees make their hearing transcripts and reports available online. Senate committees can be found at senate.gov and House committees can be found at house.gov. Of particular use on this topic is the House resource committee (resourcescommittee.house.gov) and the Senate and energy and natural resources committee (energy.senate.gov). All of the materials produced by the federal Commission on Ocean Policy can be accessed at oceancommission.gov and the House Oceans Caucus can be found at house.gov/greenwood/OCEAN/index.html.

Think tanks and advocacy groups. Almost every think tank and advocacy group in the U.S. has a website with a substantial amount of material that reflects their own point of view on particular topics. Generally, these groups represent particular ideological points of view. The Heritage Foundation (heritage.org) is the leading conservative voice on the WWW and has opinions on everything from gun control to taxation to missile defense, though always with a conservative slant. The CATO Institute (cato.org) also has an opinion on nearly everything but with a libertarian perspective. A more middle of the road liberal perspective can be found on most issues at the Brookings Institute (brookings.edu).

In addition to these general advocates of their ideological outlook, debaters and coaches can find many sites that have topic-specific materials such as the Pew Oceans Commission (pewoceans.org), the David Suzuki Foundation (davidsuzuki.org/Oceans), Ocean Defense International (oceandefense.org), and the National Resources Defense Council's oceans page (nrde.org/water/oceans/default.asp).

The resources just referenced are a very small sampling of the tremendous volume of material that is of use to debaters that is freely available on the WWW. And, although the WWW is often heavily-criticized for making available material that is factually inaccurate or poorly qualified, much of the material that is available is written by leading government officials, field experts, and academics. The quality of much of this material far exceeds what most individual debaters and coaches are likely to find in their own libraries.

Lexis-Nexis and the WWW are not the only means that debaters and coaches have at their disposal to do online research. Many services such as Infotrac, Ebscohost, ScienceDirect, and jstor.org make an extensive collection of full-text articles from hundreds of journals available online. Generally, schools and libraries, not individuals, subscribe to these services since they are very expensive, but debaters and coaches should investigate whether or not they have access to these services because they can often find full-text articles through these services that are not available for free on the web or through Lexis-Nexis. Most debate researchers seem to fail to take advantage of these services, instead relying almost exclusively on Lexis-Nexis and the WWW.

Community Building

Research is not the only thing that debaters and coaches use the WWW for. One very important use of technology in debate is to provide a means for debaters and coaches to communicate.

The most popular means of communication is listservs. Listservs are essentially large email lists that enable a poster to post a message to the group. Everyone who is signed-up to the listserv receives the posts and can respond back to the poster individually or to the entire group. College coaches and debaters communicate largely through the Eledebe listserv (http://www.netc.edu/mailman/listinfo/eledebe). The listserv is used to post tournament invitations, tournament results, discuss controversial issues in debate, and even controversial issues in the world. Sometimes, personal messages, such as wedding and birth announcements are made. High school policy debaters use the CX-L (cx-l-admin@debate.net) high school LD debaters use ld-l (To subscribe or join the ld-l, send an email message to major.domo@world.std.com with the single phrase "subscribe ld-l" in text.).

Listservs are not the only means to communicate in the debate community. As in the rest of society, message boards are becoming a popular means of communication. Although use of the boards has not been caught on in college policy debate, they are used extensively in high school debate.

Cross-X.com was launched in 1999 and is the leading community discussion site for high school debate. The discussion forums have thousands of active users from every region of the country and cover every topic of interest to debaters. The site also features an evidence exchange, articles of interest to debaters, chat, and categories links to external resources. The site is supported by evidence sales, including the weekly Thursday File politics update service.

hsdebate.com is an Internet debate landmark—since 1996 the site has archived a variety of "hard info" for the high school debate community, and now includes many years of historical results and invitations as well as other information in its archives, which are updated regularly. The site also features discussion forums, chat, and the Evidence Exchange, a fictional currency free market for trading debate evidence.

PlanetDebate.com also provides a number of free community services, including message boards, chat, high school and college case lists, tournament invitations, tournament results, and judge philosophies. Currently, the judge philosophy database has over 800 judge philosophies and can be easily sorted into high school and college categories and by the national tournament.

Another way of promoting community is by encouraging the growth of national and regional debate organizations. Many of the forensics organizations have web sites to promote the growth of their own organizations and debate in general. The National Forensics League (nflonline.org) has a website where debaters and coaches can find out
Section A: Articles and Topicality, p. A-11

about new LD and Ted Turner topics, check their NFL points, purchase merchandise, and read the Roundup online. The National Debate Coaches Association (thendca.com) has a site for members, and so does the Washington-Arlington Catholic Forensics League (wacfl.org). The WACFL made extensive use of its site this Spring to provide important information for those attending the Catholic national tournament in May. The college Cross-Examination Debate Association (cede.org) also has a useful site. More debate organizations can be found at http://directory.google.com/Top/Society/Organizations/Student/Academic/Competitions/Debating/

Instruction and Learning

In addition to researching and communicating, debaters can use the WWW to learn about debate. The innovator in the use of the WWW to deliver debate instruction is Dr. Tuna Snider, Director of Debate at the University of Vermont, who, through his website, Debate Central (debate.uvm.edu) has made debate instruction available at no cost to a worldwide audience. Debate Central features a free debate textbook, online videos on the basics of debate, lists of debate organizations, demonstration debates, journal articles about debate, and many other materials.

PlanetDebate.com, a Project of Harvard Debate Inc., is moving beyond its role as a provider of research materials for debaters to being a provider of instructional materials for debaters and coaches. This year, under the direction of Dr. Timothy O’Donnell, the Director of Debate at Mary Washington College, Planet Debate is developing a complete instruction section that includes general debate instruction, topic specific lesson plans, course activity materials, and coaching materials. Debaters and coaches can already access Stefan’s Oceans Guide, a 400 page textbook that explains arguments on the upcoming topic, over five thousand research links described above that are organized by topic and side, and a number of downloadable .pdfs that can be used for skill evaluation.

This summer, Planet Debate is partnering with the Wake Forest Debate workshops (wakedebate.org) to deliver two unique instructional opportunities. First, through a partnership with Planet Debate, Wake Forest will be offering year-long learning to all of its summer participants. Students who will not even arrive in Winston-Salem until the middle of June or the beginning of July began their instruction in mid-May with online readings from Stefan’s Oceans Guide and introductory topic and topicality lectures. Students also received early access to their starter briefs and a chance to meet other institute attendees through special forums that only Wake students can access. After the students leave Winston-Salem, they will be able to continue their instruction through additional and additional online forum conversations with lab leaders. Northwestern and Dartmouth are also taking advantage of Planet Debate’s infrastructure to enhance the learning experience of their students through the summer.

Second, students who are otherwise unable to attend a summer workshop program will be able to learn all summer through Planet Debate’s E-Institute. In partnership with Wake Forest, the E-Institute is going to provide audio files of the Wake Forest camp lectures available to students who participate in the E-Institute. In addition to listening to these lectures and receiving feedback from online instructors, students will learn with readings from the Oceans Guide, do research with the research links, and practice writing with Planet Debate’s 25,000+ card evidence database. Summer Debate (summerdebate.com) also offers an online program.

Commercial Product Delivery

In addition to being used as a means to research and promote instruction, the web is also being used to deliver evidence-based products such as debate handbooks to students. Planet Debate provides subscribers with a 25,000+ card evidence database with research on the current oceans topic and an extensive backfile. The evidence database contains all of the evidence in Wake Forest’s Debater’s Research Guide, the Harvard debate Impacts, the Michigan Blue Book, and a number of other databases. The evidence database is updated throughout the year so debaters will always have evidence on new affirmatives. In addition to the database, Planet Debate offers fully-briefed affirmatives, controversy documents, and a number of other products. The evidence database is updated throughout the year so debaters will always have evidence on new affirmatives.

Paradigm Research (onparadigm.com) offers a full line of CX and LD products available in print or as pdf downloads, as well as its latest project - BLOX - which offers a selection of topical briefs for CX and LD debaters from the Paradigm library - an online library with ready-to-run arguments available to the entire squad every hour of every day. Paradigm is the longtime distributor of the Wake Forest DRG.

Other debate handbook providers include Victory Briefs (victorybriefs.com), Big Sky Debate (bigskydebate.com), and West Coast Debate (wcdus.net/sec/wedebate).

Conclusion

The WWW has provided many opportunities for coaches and debaters to improve their research efforts, build community, assist in learning, and distribute evidence-based resources. Those who take full advantage of these resources are likely to enjoy a competitive edge.